

THE TIMES

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Heads warn of social upheaval

Anti-school bias 'blights lives of boys'

BY JOHN O'LEARY AND DAVID CHARTER



Woodhead: reason sought for boys' failure

WHITE working-class boys are getting caught in a vicious circle of under-achievement at school that could lead through truancy to a life of unemployment or crime and eventually cause social upheaval, education experts said yesterday.

Many boys are leaving school without basic skills, and their failure is described by the Chief Inspector of Schools as one of the most disturbing problems facing the education system.

Girls are now more successful than boys in every subject except physics, and children from almost all ethnic minorities are achieving better examination results than white boys from poor inner city areas, who are now the most likely to be completely unqualified at 16.

Chris Woodhead, the chief inspector and head of the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), says that it is vital that an explanation is found for the boys' failure. Writing in *The Times* today, he points to bleak employment prospects and the absence of male role models in families run by single mothers, while his inspectors lay some of the blame on teachers. In a scathing indictment of schools in poor urban areas, Ofsted says that low expectations and monotonous teaching were contributing to a lack of motivation among pupils.

They concluded that there was evidence of an "anti-education culture" among working-class boys, and academics and head teachers predicted yesterday that social upheaval would follow if attitudes did not change.

An analysis of last year's inspection reports showed that although under-achievement by white working-class boys was most marked in secondary schools, it was becoming apparent among primary pu-

port. In his annual report, Mr Woodhead said that teachers in disadvantaged urban areas were often distracted by pastoral issues and recognised that many schools in such areas were having to provide support for parents. Today, he suggests that it might be necessary in future to educate children for parenthood.

He also points to the common perception that many minority communities have a greater commitment to education, a view echoed by David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, who said that schools were facing insuperable difficulties arising largely from parental attitudes.

"In some areas, it is difficult to get white parents to meetings and too many boys are slipping into long-term unemployment and criminality," he said. "In the Asian community, particularly, there is an entirely different attitude to education."

Professor Alan Smithers, a government adviser and professor of Policy Research at Brunel University, said the changing employment scene was lagging behind all but their Afro-Caribbean counterparts, and a more recent survey in Liverpool showed children from ethnic minorities closing the gap on white pupils who have traditionally earned higher grades.

Standards in disadvantaged urban areas were much lower than elsewhere, Ofsted said, and inspectors found a "cycle of under-achievement, low expectation, monotonous provision and poor motivation".

In his *Times* express, Mr Woodhead expresses the fear that there is an explicit anti-educational culture among white working-class boys and says that their disruptive behaviour may be made worse by inadequate parental sup-

port.

Chris Woodhead, page 18



Eileen Pembroke, who brought to light allegations of sexual harassment

Lawyers' code of conduct

BY FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

SOLICITORS are likely to be issued with guidelines to help them to avoid allegations of sexual harassment.

Measure to be proposed in a report to the Law Society's governing body this week include the setting-up of a telephone "hotline" for solicitors complaining about how they are treated in their offices.

The proposals have been drawn up in an effort to prevent any repeat of last year's furor over allegations of sexual harassment at the Law Society's headquarters.

The report includes a new definition of how solicitors should behave. It says that sexual harassment can take many forms and that it is for individuals to determine what behaviour is acceptable to them and what behaviour they regard as offensive.

However, it proposes guidance for the profession in the shape of a few examples. It explains that sexual harassment can include: unwelcome jokes, innuendos, or remarks of a sexual nature; unwelcome pressure to socialise outside work; unwelcome physical contact such as kissing, hand holding, groping or petting.

The proposals are certain to provoke a new dispute between the council and Martin Mears, its president and arch-opponent of political correctness. His views are strongly opposed by, among others, Eileen Pembroke, a member of the society's governing council. Mr Mears said yesterday: "I may well have something to say about this on Thursday. I am likely to

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Fishing pledge

Ministers promised to win control of Britain's fishing grounds after a ruling allowed Spanish fishermen to sue after they were banned from them..... Page 2

US censures Ambassador Kennedy after rift over Adams



BY MARTIN FLETCHER AND NICHOLAS WATT

JEAN KENNEDY SMITH, the American Ambassador to Dublin, has been criticised by State Department investigators for punishing dissent within her embassy over her past support for Gerry Adams, the Sinn Fein leader.

The department's inspector-general found "a clear pattern of retaliation" by Mrs Smith against two diplomats who disagreed with the pressure she put on President Clinton to grant Mr Adams a visa before the IRA ceasefire.

Mrs Smith was said to have been infuriated when the diplomats used

the State Department's so-called "disident channel" to voice their protests. The ambassador considered this an act of "disloyalty" that "undermined her authority", according to a confidential report. The report, which will be forwarded to Warren Christopher, the Secretary of State, claimed that the ambassador punished the diplomats by giving them "highly critical" job performance ratings.

The report goes to the heart of differences between State Department stiffs, who were reluctant to bolster Mr Adams's position before the IRA ceasefire in August 1994, and the Irish American lobby which pressed hard to promote Mr Adams.

Mrs Smith responded angrily last

year to Unionist claims that she was sympathetic to nationalists. In a letter to *The Times* she denied that she had "long been a supporter of the republican cause". Unionists said last night that the report vindicated their claims about the ambassador.

Mrs Smith said last night that she had nothing to add to a statement she made last week when reports first surfaced of differences within the embassy. The ambassador, who was informed of the *Boston Herald's* report last night during a trip to the United States, instructed the US embassy in Dublin to reiterate her initial statement. The State Department declined to comment.

M15 investigates Palestine charity

M15 is studying police information on alleged links between Hamas militants and a Palestinian fund-raising organisation registered in London with the Charity Commissioners.

Police sources believe up to £1 million a year is being raised by the Palestinians Relief and Development Fund, also known as Interpal. Yesterday Michael Heseltine said that Hamas activists in Britain are being monitored.

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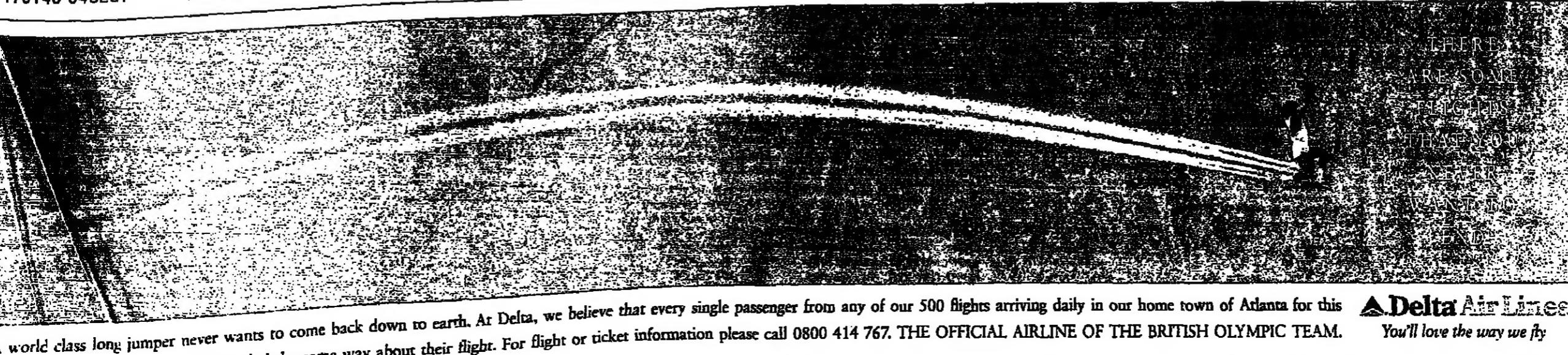
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Squeaking incomprehensibly, two species pass in the dark

Bats on the opposing sides of the Pennines speak different languages, according to the latest research. Britain's most common bat, the pipistrelle, had been thought to form a single species, but a new study suggests there may be two.

To one side of the Pennines, pipistrels communicate using a sound system based on 45 kilohertz. They have pointed snouts. On the other side, snouts are snobbier, faces are plumper and the bats pitch their voice at 55 kilohertz. "We have

an east/west divide," an expert told the *Today* programme yesterday morning.

That afternoon, experts observing Prime Minister's Questions noted an even more striking dichotomy. MPs have often been thought to belong to a single race, the human race. But study of their snouts, squeaks and general behaviour, suggests not only that they belong to two distinct races, but that these, too, are unable to communicate. Imagine a line drawn from the Speaker's Chair to the

door, separating the two sides of the House. This is Westminster's Pennines. To Betty Boothroyd's right lies the land of the Tory bats. These have more pointed snouts and more tailored suits. They squeak at a lower frequency — often closer to a grunt — and squabble ceaselessly among themselves.

Yesterday, their Prime Pipistrelles having flitted off to the Far East, they were led by his Deputy, a wily old bat called Heseltine. As so often with this tribe, opening hostilities

involved a skirmish with awkward bats on his own side. John Wilkinson (C, Ruislip & Northwood) demanded assurances over Spanish fishing in British waters. Nicholas Badger (C, Wolverhampton SW1) delivered a menacing squeak on matters European.

Heseltine, his radar system alert, took swift evasive action, dodging the question. Over to the left of the Pennines a large bat with a snobbish nose was checking out his flat path. John Prescott was preparing to fly. "Ask about repossessions," said his briefing note. Every bat behind him had the same instructions. Their Leader was away making a speech about

repossessions, and Chief Whip Donald Dewar had arranged that the Parliamentary Labour Party provide the mood music for Tony Blair's extra-Parliamentary utterances. Labour fly in formation these days, controlled by high-frequency messages beamed from their Leader but inaudible to the human ear.

Prescott asked Heseltine about repossessions. This is where the expert from *Today* would have been fascinated to note the parallels. One bat appeared unable

to make sense of the other bat's audio-signals. Heseltine's response — "Tory Government works!" — roused his side to an excited twitter, but hardly answered the squeak from over the divide.

Then Prescott did the same. Ignoring what he had just heard, he jabbered away angrily about the "sheer misery" of homeowners. Those behind him squeaked a rising chorus of support, their faces pinker by the moment. Those opposite squeaked with equal passion on unrelated matters.

Both sides twittered on until Madam Speaker called off the hopeless encounter.

"They have separated so much," said the *Today* expert. "What they simply don't recognise each other as the same species any more. One possibility is that at some time in the past, one species was divided by some kind of geological event."

These events are called general elections.

Homeowner's saviour. page

Britain challenges Spanish victory on fishing rights

By MICHAEL HORNSBY, ARTHUR LEATHLEY AND CHARLES BRENNER

MINISTERS promised yesterday to win control of Britain's fishing grounds after suffering a legal defeat that allows Spanish fishermen to sue the Government for banning them from British waters.

Britain is to challenge its European partners this month to make urgent changes to the law after the European Court of Justice ruled that Britain should not have banned Spanish-registered boats from British-registered boats from British waters.

The move came amid growing anger over yesterday's ruling by the court which could force the Government to pay up to £30 million damages to Spanish-owned vessels that it banned from fishing for 15 months six years ago.

Tony Baldry, the Fisheries Minister, called the judgment "crazy" and said the Government would insist the issue was discussed at the inter-governmental conference (IGC) on the future of the European Union which opens in Italy on March 29.

Last night backbenchers were putting pressure on ministers to take immediate steps to protect British fish quotas and to give details of government plans to curb the powers

of the European Court in a White Paper to be published this month.

One minister said that the court's decision would "whip up a frenzy that we could have done without" in advance of the White Paper. The Government is aware of the sensitivity of the fisheries issue in the wake of December's Commons defeat, when Tory Eurosceptics and MPs with constituency fishing interests sided with Labour.

Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, indicated the Government's readiness to confront other EU member states over fishing at the IGC when he told MPs of the Government's objections to the court ruling. "It is obviously a decision which we regret and one which we shall certainly take up in the context of the IGC. We believe that there have to be changes."

Mr Baldry said: "The quota-hoppers have got to go. If it requires treaty changes, we will seek treaty changes. If new protocols are needed, we will seek them. But so far as we are concerned, our new charter of the seas is that UK fish should be for UK fishermen. The UK has a quota for the fish we can catch, but

clearly it is crazy if, for example, a Spanish-owned, Spanish-crewed and Spanish-skipped trawler fishing out of Spain, landing her catch back in Spain, is able to fish against our national UK quota."

He added: "I do not think there is any head of government in Europe who could stand up and rationally and sensibly justify the nationals of one member state taking the fish of the citizens of another member state."

Gavin Strang, the Opposition spokesman on agriculture and fisheries, said the Government should have acted much earlier. "The common fisheries policy was reviewed in 1992 and the Government missed that opportunity to secure the necessary adjustments."

Barrie Deas, chief executive of the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations, said: "The court's ruling makes nonsense of the common fisheries policy."

The Spanish claims to compensation relate to 15 months in 1989 and 1990 when 90 Spanish-owned vessels were struck off the British register and forced to lay up, an action later judged illegal by the European court.

EU may lift temazepam ban

By NICHOLAS WOOD
CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

A GOVERNMENT ban on a popular sleeping pill blamed for hundreds of drug-related deaths could be overturned because it conflicts with European law. Last night, ministers were bracing themselves for another confrontation with the European Union amid fears that they were about to lose a High Court case

brought by the manufacturers of temazepam.

Senior Whitehall sources said that there was an "expectation" that the Government would lose the judicial review sought by R.P. Scherer Ltd after the decision in October to stop GPs prescribing gel-filled capsules of the drug. The ban was imposed from January after Michael Forsyth, the Scottish Secretary, said that it had created massive profits for drug dealers and been at

the root of an appalling crime wave.

Addicts have melted the capsules and injected the fluid — a highly dangerous practice because the gel solidifies in the veins, causing gangrene and leading to amputation of limbs. Ministers are worried that their move will be declared unlawful because the court will rule that, contrary to EU law, their ban went beyond what was necessary to tackle misuse of temazepam.

Earl Spencer said yesterday that living abroad might help his sister, the Princess of Wales, to get her difficulties into perspective.

He said he and his estranged wife had decided to live in South Africa to find some "breathing space" to assess their lives. The Princess might benefit if she did the same, he told ITN.

Lord Spencer went to South Africa with Victoria, his wife, because "she wanted to get away from things she didn't like in England and top of the list was her treatment by the tabloids". He was speaking after being awarded libel damages of £50,000 against the *Daily Express* over a series of articles which suggested that he was involved in the diamond fraud which led to his friend Darius Guppy being imprisoned.

He said that he did not know how long he would stay in South Africa, but that his wife would probably never return. "We are not planning to get back together again."

His libel action is estimated to have cost the *Daily Express* more than £170,000, including legal fees. He said he had returned to England to make two things clear: "One is that I see this as an important victory after two years of the *Daily Express* trying to wriggle out of it. The other is that I want to make it absolutely clear to all newspapers that, although I live on the other side of the world, I will still fight them if they question my integrity or honesty."

Mr Guppy, who was best man at the Spencers' wedding, was freed last month after serving three years of a five-year sentence for staging an insurance fraud that netted £1.8 million.

The proposal caused alarm among RAF chiefs and at British Aerospace, which had recommended leasing the American F16s, arguing that it would be a waste of money to fit new missile systems to the Tornado F3. They said the F16 would provide the RAF with an agile, versatile aircraft before the Eurofighter comes into service from about 2002.

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In announcing the Tornado contract yesterday, James Arbuthnot, the Defence Procurement Minister, said British Aerospace had been selected to lead the Tornado work. The aircraft is being fitted with a joint tactical information distribution system that allows details of enemy aircraft picked up on radars to be given instantly to the Tornado aircrew.

British Aerospace said that moves would be made to persuade other Tornado customers, such as the Saudis, to upgrade their aircraft with the two new missile systems.

The Tornado F3 will now run through to 2010. It will be replaced gradually by the Eurofighter, which is being developed by Britain, Germany, Spain and Italy.

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Law Society

Continued from page 1
express some degree of scepticism. I can think of better uses of the society's time and resources."

The examples of sexual harassment given in the proposals are intended to help solicitors in their interpretation of a new definition of sexual harassment which the council will also be asked to approve. This defines it as "unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that detrimentally affects the working environment or leads to adverse work-related consequences for the victims of harassment or otherwise affects the dignity of women and men at work".

The measures have been drawn up in the wake of the dispute over allegations of sexual harassment against John Young, then deputy president of the Law Society, last summer. The allegations were first publicised by Ms Pembroke, although she did not name Mr Young. As a result, Mr Young withdrew his candidature from the Law Society presidential elections. In the contested elections that followed, Mr Mears was elected president on a populist and anti-establishment vote.

Since last year, the society's equal opportunities committee has reviewed complaints of sexual harassment involving the profession and looked at complaints procedures. One proposal is that staff might be trained to give advice and assistance in sexual harassment cases and even that a confidential telephone "hot line" should be set up.

In cases involving members of the society's governing council, the report says that, although the president of the Law Society may seek to resolve minor allegations informally, on balance they should be investigated independently by the Solicitors Complaints Bureau.

JOHN MAJOR stepped up his campaign to woo the emerging economies of Asia yesterday as three more Korean electrical engineering companies announced that they had chosen Britain as a manufacturing base to 19.

In a speech to the Federation of Korean Industry, Mr Major spoke of the enormous increase in economic ties between the two countries: British exports to Korea last year increased by 44 per cent, and Korean exports to Britain by 61 per cent.

He told Korean companies they could expect a warm welcome and would be treated exactly the same as British companies. "The case for coming to Britain is becoming stronger every day," he said.

BY PHILIP WEBSTER, POLITICAL EDITOR, IN SEOUL

PONG JANG — are to locate in the Dearne Valley in South Yorkshire. They take the number of Korean companies who have chosen Britain as a manufacturing base to 19.

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Bar blacklists law firm

The Bar Council has blacklisted the firm of solicitors which sought legal aid for an armed robber to sue police who arrested him. Joseph Hill, the senior partner in the firm, is to appear before a disciplinary tribunal over an allegation of a failure to pay fees to barristers and experts involved in cases.

A spokeswoman for the Bar Council said yesterday that there had been a number of complaints from barristers about non-payment of fees due to them from Mr Hill's north London firm.

Police gunman in court

Committee proceedings began yesterday at Bow Street Magistrates' Court against a Scotland Yard marksman accused of blasting a suspected car thief to death. PC Patrick Hodgson, 49, is the first British policeman to be charged with murder while on duty. David Ewin, 38, died a fortnight after he was shot twice while driving a car in Barnes, southwest London, with PC Hodgson clinging to the side of it. Ewin was on release half-way through a five-year sentence for armed robbery.

astrians also have pinker faces and the Yorkshires have more pointed snouts.

DNA testing of tissue shows there is enough of a difference to warrant two different Latin names for them. The Yorkshire bat is likely to keep the existing name while the honour of finding a title for the new species will fall to its discoverer, Dr Jones.

Mr Altringham said there was an obvious explanation for the apparent split in the species. "One possibility is that in the very distant past — possibly three million years ago — one species was actually divided by some kind of geological event and the two evolved in isolation. At some later stage they were able to mix again, but they had separated by so much that

further investigation by John Altringham, senior biologist lecturer at Leeds University, discovered that the pipistrelles he studied in a forest near Pickering in North Yorkshire all transmitted on 45 kilohertz. Those he watched around Lancaster all broadcast on 55 kilohertz.

He said yesterday: "At first we thought the bats had a range of signals, but closer examination showed they transmit on only one wavelength. They will mix together happily enough, but there seems to be no interbreeding.

"It looks like we have an east-west divide. Both types are found in Lancashire and Yorkshire, but one type is

more dominant in Yorkshire, the other is more dominant in Lancashire."

Further investigations showed further differences between the bats. Yorkshire pipistrelles seem to be more promiscuous and live a nomadic lifestyle, while the Lancastrians form more stable maternity colonies. The Lancashire

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they simply did not recognise each other as the same species any more."

Mr Altringham added: "We have a lot more work to do. Professionally I find them fascinating. Apart from dolphins they are the only mammals which use one location, but frankly I think they are cute."

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Mr Al

British clear film of child sex scenes barred by America

By DALYA ALBERGE, ARTS CORRESPONDENT

A FILM whose depiction of ten-year-olds indulging in sex and drugs was considered so offensive it was refused a general certificate in America has been approved by British censors.

Film critics on both sides of the Atlantic were unable to stomach the violence when *Kids* was shown in specialist cinemas. *The New York Times* said the children indulged in so much sex, it "mad rabbits look lazy". Another reviewer said it was the "nearest yet that mainstream cinema has come to so-called kiddie porn". David Robinson, the film critic, described it as voyeuristic.

Kids is to be shown in cinemas around Britain from May 17, after the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) decided to award it an 18 certificate.

The film, which explores adolescent sexuality in New York, features a 14-year-old girl who catches AIDS after sleeping with the "Virgin Surgeon" who tries to avoid the disease by restricting himself to virgins. Throughout the movie, children lead promiscuous lives.

For the film-makers, "it offers an unflinching slice of areas of teenage existence which are hidden from parental view — areas of experiment with drink, drugs, violence, sex and petty crime". It is

believed that Scotland Yard sent officers from the pornography unit to a private screening. Larry Clark, the director, insisted that none of the actors was under 16, although the cast look younger.

James Ferman, director of the BBFC, said he was justified in allowing the film into this country: "Larry Clark's film is both highly courageous and strictly moral in its portrait of adolescent life and we are delighted to be releasing such an important landmark film."

Mary Whitehouse, the broadcasting campaigner, said: "I certainly do not agree with the fact that this film has received a certificate. The people who give these films certificates should have more sense, more care and more consideration on the impact these films have not just on children but on the adults too. It takes away their sense of care."

He added: "As a harbinger of the future, it makes for very depressing viewing, even on this side of the Atlantic, but the board did not feel it appropriate to condemn the messenger for bearing such bad news."

Mr Ferman explained that proof of age was required for all the actors involved in the simulated sex scenes. "None was below the British age of consent; indeed, they were all well above it. Nevertheless, cuts totalling just under a minute were made to remove some shots of minors which were not acceptable under the board's own very strict policy, which has always erred on the side of caution in such matters."

Liz Wren of Electric Pictures, the distributor, said: "Larry Clark's film is both highly courageous and strictly moral in its portrait of adolescent life and we are delighted to be releasing such an important landmark film."

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Among recent films that have pushed at censorship barriers in recent years is Oliver Stone's *Natural Born Killers*, about the exploits of a couple who terrorise America's South-West, murdering 100 victims. The film was alleged to have inspired actual killings in America and France. However, the BBFC found no significant basis for the claims.

Families may sue over Army cadets who died in fire

By ANDREW PIERCE

THE families of two officer cadets who died when their Land Rover turned over and burst into flames are taking legal action against the Army, which has so far failed to set up an inquiry.

Last May an inquest jury returned verdicts of death by misadventure on Rebecca Norris, 20, of Maidstone, Kent, and Karen Buttenshaw, 19, of Hunstanton, Norfolk. Karen's father Ian, a lieutenant-colonel who has been a soldier for 30 years, told *The Times* last night: "The Ministry of Defence has stalled, frustrated and blocked every attempt to discover what happened to my daughter. It is disgusting and makes you suspect a cover-up. We have no intention of going away."

At the inquest David Masters, the Wiltshire Coroner, urged a board of inquiry be set up after blaming a faulty petrol cap for the fire that killed the two best friends, who were students at Oxford Brookes University. Mr Masters questioned why Ms Buttenshaw, who was not a qualified driver, was allowed behind the wheel of an army vehicle without supervision.

The sergeant-major who was in charge of the 40 cadets taking part in the exercise on Salisbury Plain in October

Bomb-plot animal rights man convicted

By A STAFF REPORTER

AN ANIMAL rights terrorist who plotted a bombing campaign was convicted yesterday of conspiring to commit arson.

Birmingham Crown Court was told during a five-week trial that David Callender, 37, of Waterloo, Merseyside, had been arrested after a tip-off from a shop assistant who became suspicious when he ordered 60 kitchen timers.

After his arrest, police uncovered a bomb factory at a safe house in Birmingham. Officers found enough devices to plant 100 bombs and a list of potential targets.

With the bomb-making equipment, detailed plans were found referring to reconnaissance visits to target sites, levels of security and escape routes. Police believe a terror campaign was imminent, which would have caused extensive damage to property and possible risk to life.

The court was told that Callender, who has previous convictions for attacks in support of the Animal Liberation Front, began living at a house in Sparkhill, Birmingham, in 1994.

Police believe that others must have been involved in researching the targets and funding the campaign but have not traced them.

Among the intended targets were an agricultural college, food manufacturers, horse-breeders, foxhound associations, slaughterhouses and the Milk Marketing Board.

Callender had denied conspiracy to commit arson, but the jury returned a guilty verdict after 11 hours. Gregg Avery, 28, of Macclesfield, Cheshire, was acquitted of the same charge. He had claimed that although he was an animal rights supporter he had no idea what Callender was planning. Peter Matthews, the Recorder, adjourned sentence until today.



Widow stays cool as vampire bat kills 57-stone polar bear

THE father of the world's best-known polar bear has died after swallowing a six-inch plastic vampire bat. Barney, father of the Fox's Glacier Minis bear-cub Mintie, collapsed at Edinburgh Zoo, apparently after a child threw the toy into its enclosure.

Last night zoo staff said they were distraught over the death. However, Barney's life partner, Mercedes, was coping well and, if anything, looking quite pleased.

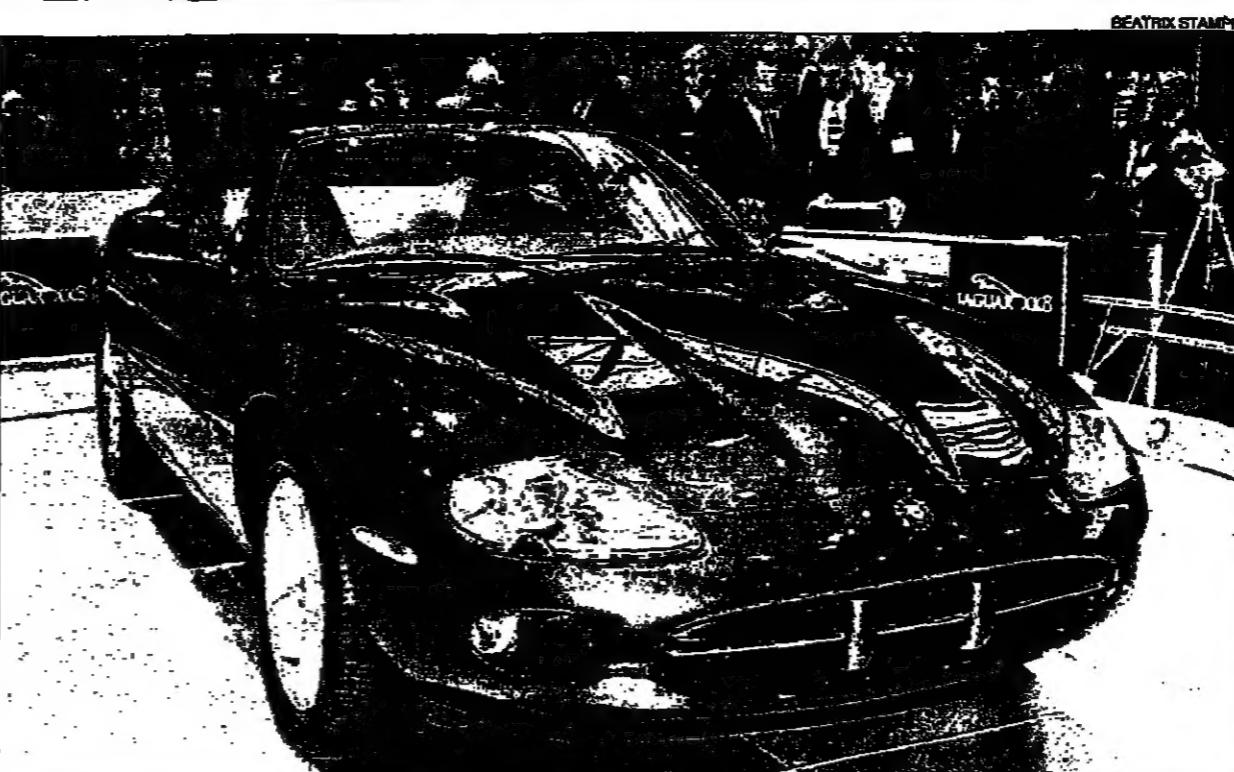
Polar bears are animals generally like to lead solitary lives and this certainly seems to be the case as far as Mercedes is concerned," a woman said. "Since

Barney's death she seems to be a lot more outgoing and is enjoying herself more.

"She no longer has to compete with anyone over who gets first pick at the food and now she gets to sit on the best rock in the enclosure, which Barney had always occupied. She doesn't seem to be a grieving widow."

Barney was 20 years old and weighed more than 57 stone. It had lived at Edinburgh Zoo since it was a cub. A post-mortem examination found the plastic bat in its lower intestine.

Miranda Stevenson, curator of Edinburgh Zoo, said: "Barney was a handsome and very popular animal, and will be very much missed by all



The new XK8 at the Geneva Motor Show. Despite nostalgia for past Jaguar sports cars, it has a Ford engine

Jaguar's V8 supercar tempts buyers

By KAVIN EASON
MOTORING EDITOR

CUSTOMERS are queuing to place orders for the new Jaguar supercar unveiled yesterday at the Geneva Motor Show more than six months before it goes on sale. Nick Scheele, chairman of Jaguar, said letters were piling up from people wanting to put their names down for the XK8, which will reach showrooms in October.

The XK8 was launched on a wave of enthusiasm and nostalgia for the maker's great sports cars of the past, even though it is the first Jaguar with a Ford engine — a four-litre V8. Customers

have been walking into H.R. Owen's dealership in west London offering deposits without even knowing the car's price, estimated to be about £50,000. Many are willing to swap their current Mercedes-Benz, BMW or Porsche. There will be few tears, however, for the 20-year-old XJS model, which the XK8 replaces. It was a huge disappointment as successor to the definitive Jaguar sports car, the E-type, launched at Geneva 35 years ago.

Mr Scheele hopes the XK8, which will be made as a convertible and a coupé, will

be seen as the spiritual descendant of the E-type, the world's first 160mph production car.

He is still short of the 48 tests taken by Git Kaur Randhawa, who passed in 1987 after 330 lessons. Because he is scared of flying, Mr Murray will travel to London by train, on a return ticket.

THE PRINCIPLES OF INFORMATION:

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Parents left to follow ambulance through blizzard as son was transferred between four hospitals

Judge condemns 'insensitive' NHS over dying boy

By DOMINIC KENNEDY, SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

MEDICAL authorities who took a dying ten-year-old boy to four hospitals during a 12-hour ordeal were condemned yesterday for "ghastly misjudgment".

A judge who compiled an official report on his treatment said that he was shocked by his investigation into the case of Nicholas Geldard, who died of a brain haemorrhage. The boy's parents, who drove across the Pennines at night in a blizzard before losing track of the ambulance, which was full of equipment to carry them, said they were still angry and frustrated and would pursue legal action.

Nicholas was refused a scan because a £1 million machine, bought by public subscription to which the Geldards had donated, was available only in office hours. The radiologist on call could not be contacted at a hospital Christmas concert rehearsal.

Nicholas was transferred from Manchester to Leeds, where his family expected him to have an operation, though he was probably already brain-dead by the time he was put into the ambulance.

Judge Bill Ashworth con-

demned the family's experiences at the hands of the National Health Service while accepting that Nicholas's brain condition, a ruptured aneurysm, was so rare that he probably would have died anyway. The case "revealed a curious mix of praiseworthy staff commitment, idiosyncratic call-out arrangements, ghastly misjudgment and insensitivity in sending Nicholas to Leeds General Infirmary, and a ponderous bureaucracy that bedevilled clinicians seeking paediatric neurological and neurosurgical advice and treatment".

Nicholas had been playing with a friend on his computer at home last December when he was found by his mother unconscious and gurgling, his eyes shut and teeth tightly closed. When they were in the ambulance on the way to Stockport Infirmary, a paramedic allegedly said to his colleague: "Let's put on the blue light so's you can get home early for your tea."

At 5.11pm Stockport Infirmary asked for Nicholas to be urgently transferred to the paediatric ward at Stepping Hill Hospital, 2½ miles away.

Ann Coffey, Labour MP for Stockport, told the inquiry the public had not been told that the scanner it raised more

but it took more than an hour to find an ambulance. Nicholas eventually arrived at 6.42pm. "We were surprised to learn that the ambulance department working definition of 'urgent' is between one and four hours," the judge said.

At 9.30pm the switchboard was asked to contact the radiologist to see if he could perform a scan at Stepping Hill. The radiologist could not be contacted because he was at the rehearsal, carrying his own radio pager whose number was on a switchboard notice but had been crossed out. The switchboard only had the numbers of two hospital-supplied pagers that he was not carrying.

The clinical director of radiology, who was not on call but was particularly experienced in emergency scanning, was contacted but was unable to leave his three children at home. He pointed out the scanner did not operate around the clock, a situation described by the judge as absurd.

Ann Coffey, Labour MP for Stockport, told the inquiry the public had not been told that the scanner it raised more



Cath and David Geldard with a photograph of their 10-year-old son: "We still think Nicholas may have been saved"

than a million pounds to buy in April 1994 was unavailable at night because the health service could not afford to run it.

Nicholas arrived at Hope Hospital, Manchester, at 2.35am where he was given a scan, but because there were no paediatric intensive care beds available in Manchester,

Liverpool or Sheffield, he was driven to Leeds where he arrived at 4.30am. "We were shocked to learn that distressed parents were left to drive 55 miles through a snowstorm at three o'clock in the morning to a hospital in a strange city," said the judge, who is chairman of East Lancashire Health Authority

and whose inquiry was commissioned by the North West Regional Health Authority.

Nicholas was probably brain-dead by the time he arrived at Hope Hospital and the five-strong inquiry team strongly felt it was remiss of staff not to ask Nicholas's doctor to reconsider whether he should travel to Leeds. Cath

announce measures to improve intensive care units. The Commons announcement, which follows a year-long review ordered by his predecessor, Virginia Bottomley, is expected to tackle bed shortages, define intensive care and provide guidelines for the admission and discharge of patients.

Bed shortage blamed for Leah organ move

By STEPHEN FARRELL



Leah Betts died after taking Ecstasy at party

THE liver of Leah Betts, a teenager who died after taking Ecstasy, was sent to Spain because there were too few intensive care beds in British transplant centres. Two of the seven specialist hospitals capable of carrying out a liver transplant operation, had no intensive care beds available but only Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridgeshire is known to have had a patient waiting, it was disclosed yesterday.

Professor Sir Roy Calne, consultant surgeon at Addenbrooke's, joined Leah's parents in condemning the shortage. "We were one of the hospitals which had to turn it down. The lack of intensive care beds, both in transplant and general surgery, is a very real problem," he said. Sir Roy, who carried out Britain's first

liver transplant operation 30 years ago, wrote to *The Times* last month, criticising the lack of beds and doctors.

"Fortunately in this case the liver was used by someone in Spain so it's not a tragedy. But it's a shame that it couldn't have been used by a British patient. I have now had to turn down 29 livers in just over a year because of a shortage of intensive care beds. In that time we have had 11 patients die on the waiting list."

Leah died on November 16 after taking Ecstasy on her eighteenth birthday at her parents' home in Latchingdon, Essex.

Vanesa Morgan, transplant co-ordinator for North Thames Region, insisted the authority followed standard procedure and notified all seven liver transplant centres in Britain first. When they were unable to use the organ, she offered it to continental Europe through the Euro-

Transplant service. She confirmed that of the seven transplant centres two had no beds and two were unable to take Leah's liver because surgeons were working on other cases. The other three had no suitable patients.

"Obviously if you can't place it in Britain you do feel a little bit disappointed, but then you just feel so relieved when Europe does take it. It is awful if you have to say to a family which has made the very brave decision to donate: 'I'm sorry, there were no recipients anywhere'."

Leah's parents did not know the liver had gone abroad. Her father Paul, 49, said: "I am glad it gave someone a new life. What does give me concern is that we are supposed to have the best health service in the world and yet there appear to be a lack of beds for transplant patients. Why couldn't it have been used here?"

Cancer patient given new liver, pancreas and bowel

By JEREMY LAURANCE
HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

A MAN aged 23 with advanced cancer has had a triple transplant in an attempt to save his life.

Haldene Butler, of Omagh, Co Tyrone, received a new liver, pancreas and bowel in the radical operation, never attempted in the United Kingdom before.

Mr Butler was suffering from a rare cancer that had spread to his internal organs. He had undergone several operations in Belfast before being flown to St James's

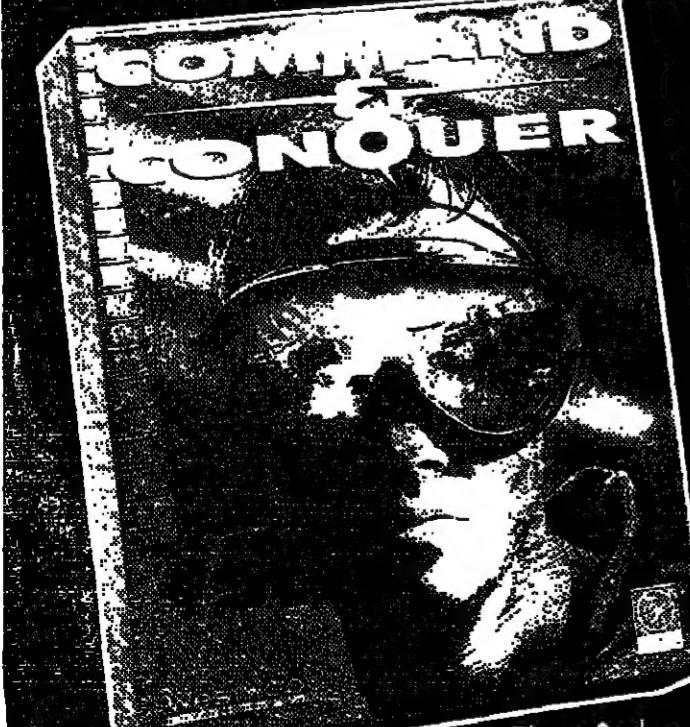
University Hospital, Leeds, where a spokeswoman said the night-time transplant was "his last chance".

The eight-and-a-half hour operation was performed last week after a donor became available. Steve Pollard, the surgeon who led the team and who specialises in liver and small bowel transplants, said:

"This is the first time a triple transplant has been carried out in the UK, possibly in Europe and maybe even in the world."

He added: "The operation was less difficult than we anti-

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One fifth of MoD's art collection goes Awol

By NIGEL WILLIAMSON, WHITEHALL CORRESPONDENT

THE Ministry of Defence has "lost" almost 200 works of art, one fifth of its entire collection. The paintings, prints and drawings have gone absent without leave from official military residences, messes and even the offices of defence ministers. One print disappeared from a flat used by Tom King, the former Defence Secretary, in 1991.

The value of the missing works of art is not known, but the ministry's collection of about 900 items is worth in excess of £5 million. Several of the missing items are of "priceless historical rather than financial value".

The ministry realised in late 1994 that it did not know the whereabouts of 205 of the 900 works of art in its care. Inquiries subsequently located 21 of the 205 pictures. Of the



Officer of the 28th Foot, which vanished in 1992

other 184, only 23 are officially recognised as "stolen", the remainder are "lost in action". A ministry spokesman said:

"The problem is one of record keeping. We think we've still got them but we are trying to find out where." MoD police have investigated many of the cases but no arrests have been made and no items recovered.

The National Audit Office, the independent watchdog of public expenditure, issued guidelines yesterday for the better management of the collection. Among the cases its report highlighted were:

Leading article, page 19

Hidden snares of the spoken word

By TUNKU VARADARAJAN

THE linguistic traps that lie in wait to snare the unwary speaker were uncovered last night by Jean Aitchison in the final offering of her series of Reith Lectures.

These snares are rooted in language and in the role that language plays in our lives. Professor Aitchison said: "Man's oddest characteristic, compared with his nearest animal relations, is not his relative hairlessness, nor that he blushes. It is, as Professor Aitchison emphasised, his language."

The professor, who holds the Rupert Murdoch chair in Language and Communication at Oxford University, said that, unlike animals, "all normal humans can produce and understand any number of new words and sentences". But "the huge choice available to us also sets up snares".

Distinguishing between these worries and the "pseudo-worries" to which she referred in her first lecture, Professor Aitchison suggested that if speakers cleared their minds of such anxieties as split infinitives, then they might have more energy left to notice genuine pitfalls". These are the traps that humans either make for themselves, or have made for

them by skillful persuaders — persuasion being, in the professor's opinion, one of the original uses of language.

The most straightforward of these snares is the "gobbledegook syndrome". The professor defines gobbledegook as pretentious or unintelligible jargon, although it must not be confused with technical vocabulary.

"Politically correct terms are sometimes labelled gobbledegook, but this is not entirely justified," she said, observing that "PC hearts are in the right place, even if their tongues or pens are twisted up in sesquipedalian words".

Just as gobbledegook delays understanding, and can also cause misunderstanding", the professor gave warning against the effects of facile word associations. Equally, she identified a powerful "frog-in-a-well problem". The reference is to a Chinese folktale about a frog that has lived all its life in a well. "One day it hopped out and was astonished to find what a limited view of the world it had always had."

An example of this is the use of generic "he" supposedly to refer to either sex. This, Professor Aitchison argues, "is far from neutral": studies show that women derive from this usage a sense of exclusion. (It should be noted that Professor Aitchison's "matriarchs" — who in her book *The Articulate Mammal* descend to Earth to observe our language — are always female.)

Her most abstruse argument related to metaphors and the dangers they conceal.

"The phrase 'nuclear umbrella' might lead people to assume that nuclear devices are safety equipment," she said.

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The Nomad Players of East Horsley celebrate outside their dilapidated theatre

Lottery cash buys stage presence for cowshed actors

By DALYA ALBERGE, ARTS CORRESPONDENT

A VILLAGE amateur dramatics society is to move from a leaking cowshed to a purpose-built new theatre after being awarded almost £1 million of National Lottery funds.

The Nomad Players at East Horsley, Surrey, have received £911,000 to replace their present makeshift building with a modern design complete with enlarged stage, rehearsal room and 120-seat auditorium.

Geoffrey Partridge, the treasurer, said that they had been spending £4,000 a year on the shed "to hold it together"; audiences could stick their arms through the walls. "On a winter's night, cold air comes in from Siberia and engulfs the audience."

The Arts Council, which had already given £50,000 to improve the theatre design, was impressed by their activities. Educational programmes and a theatre club involve hundreds of local enthusiasts. The age range of their 130-strong cast currently rehearsing *The Importance of Being Earnest*, extends

from young children to a 93-year-old. Actresses such as Lia Williams are among many who have gone on to professional careers.

In contrast, two leading professional theatres in the area, the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre in Guildford and the Redgrave Theatre in Farnham, are short of funds. The Yvonne Arnaud will go dark within weeks, despite high-profile campaigning by Sir Derek Jacobi and Dame Judi Dench, and the Redgrave Theatre closed 15 months ago.

Mr Partridge said: "It's tough. But we're not in competition with them. We're helping to provide an audience for them in the future."

Bill Pearson, who has been involved with the Nomad Players for more than 30 years, said he sympathised with struggling professional theatres but added: "I believe we are deserving of the money we have received. I think we are the sort of organisation that the lottery is looking to fund. We have a long tradition of community drama."

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Missionary group ponders ways to spend £92m windfall

BY RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

A LITTLE-KNOWN missionary organisation has leapt into the top 30 of the British charity league with a windfall of £92 million from the sale of a plot of land in Hong Kong.

The Council for World Mission, based in Westminster, with a British staff of just 15 and 62 missionaries worldwide, has found itself overnight ranked ahead of the British Red Cross in terms of investment income. The land had been bought from the Crown by the London Missionary Society in 1857, and two hospitals were built on it. In 1977 the Council for World Mission superseded the London Missionary Society. Three years ago, the Hong Kong administration moved the hospitals to another site and the council sold the land for £135 million.

Although well outranked by the Church of England, which has assets of £24 billion, the council will now become a central player on

the British and world Christian scene after being ranked No 29 in the Henderson Top 2000 Charities 1996. Members have called an extraordinary meeting in July to decide how to spend the cash.

A 12.5 per cent portion of the £135 million was given to a private hospital trust for medical and chaplaincy work in Hong Kong and nearly a quarter has been used to set up a churches' trust in Hong Kong and China. Even after this benefice, the Council for World Mission has found itself with £92 million — 65 per cent of the total sale.

The injection of at least £92 million capital resources will make an enormous difference to the council's charitable potential." Dr Andrew Morton, the communications director, said. "So many requests in the past have been turned down for lack of funds; that situation will obviously change."

The council, hitherto one of

the less financially significant of the British registered charities, with an annual operating budget of £2.5 million and trust funds of £7.1 million, dedicates its resources to education, personnel and financial help for its member churches. Its main countries of activity are Botswana, India, Madagascar, the Solomon Islands and Taiwan. Its member churches also have missionaries in Jamaica, Korea, Nauru, Tuvalu and elsewhere.

It has six member churches in Europe, including the United Reformed Church, the Congregational Federation and the Presbyterian Church in Wales, and 24 outside.

Through its action and solidarity fund, the council has offered financial help to those affected by the volcanic eruptions in Papua New Guinea, the earthquake in India in 1994 and the recent drought in Zimbabwe. It has funded a maize mill in Malawi and a cattle farm in Samoa.



Steven Hanson with Simon: "He was desperate to get out of the school"

Runaway pupil kept diary of year's bullying

By BILL FROST

BULLYING at school drove a 12-year-old boy to run away from home, his father said yesterday after reading details of the child's suffering in a diary.

Simon Hanson, of Woolmer Hill County Secondary at Haslemere, Surrey, vanished on Sunday. He was found asleep on a bench at Gatwick on Monday. Steve Hanson, his father, said: "A group of kids had been bullying him for about a year and he was desperate to get out of the school."

Mr Hanson discovered that his son had kept a diary, Entries in the hardback dark blue book —

"Personal Diary! 1996. Do not read my diary, it is private!" — spelled out how miserable his life at school had become. "This past week has been hell which is pretty normal. I go through each day as it comes, that's the only way really because each day is like hell on earth."

"You know the usual stuff, nasty comments, rude names, getting punched, kicked — and this is like a daily routine. It's roughly the same day after day, week after week and month after month — and there is no one I can tell. I've got to move schools soon — life at Woolmer Hill is certainly not going to get better, it's going to get worse."

Another entry told how Simon was persecuted on the rugby field. "I never got passed the ball. I was just standing there like a lemon and then xxx [the name of a pupil] started shouting at me and calling me names so I shouted 'Stop calling me names'.

"When suddenly the ball

came my way I missed it and the teacher pulled me out and told me I wasn't taking part properly. I tried to tell him xxx was shouting at me but he sent me around the football pitch so I missed out on the lesson and xxx got away free."

Mr Hanson, a social worker, was aware of his son's problems but not of their severity. "I had been writing some transfer forms but had put it off because I thought he cannot go on running away from his troubles. Then, only recently, I found a note which he had written, saying something along the lines of 'How can I go on in this living hell?'

He has run away before but has always come back after a couple of hours. I thought this would be another token couple of hours." Mr Hanson said that he would seek to move his son to another school as soon as possible.

Alan Shean, Si-

mon's Headmaster, said that he was surprised by claims that protracted bullying had compelled the boy to run away. "He has appeared happy. The only concerns that were brought to my notice in the past were dealt with promptly and to the best of my knowledge to the satisfaction of both Simon and his father."

□ A junior school has trained 12 children to deal with playground arguments and name-calling. Under a scheme planned by pupils, two are on duty each day in red sweatshirts blazoned with "Buddy across the front".

They have been given role-play training at the 250-pupil Matthew Arnold school in Toxteth, Liverpool, to help them to cope with a range of situations.

Brother finds boy, 12, hanging from bunk

A BOY was found hanging by his school tie from a bunk after being accused of theft.

Andrew Smith, 12, was found in his bedroom by Adam, his 10-year-old brother, on Friday. Andrew had been accused by a man of stealing the badge from the bonnet of his car near his school in Seaham, Co Durham, during the lunch break on Thursday. The boy, who was not a known troublemaker, was taken back to school by the man and was given a stern reprimand. The police were called to investigate.

When Jeanette and Allan

Smith, his parents, heard about the incident, Andrew was sent to bed early. He was found dead the next day.

Durham police could not confirm whether Andrew's death was suicide or an accident. A spokesman said: "We were trying to make arrangements to speak to Andrew with his parents but had not done so at the time he died. He was not arrested for any offence at any stage."

A special assembly was held to break the news of Andrew's death to his classmates at Seaham Comprehensive School.

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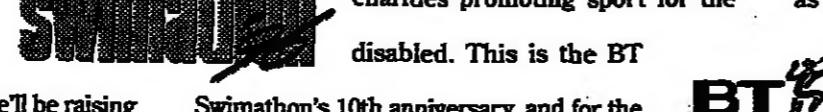
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In 1988, a Public Inquiry gave the go-ahead for a second bypass around Newbury. The Government's preferred route was the one which its own Landscape Advisory Committee warned would cause "quite unacceptable" damage to an "intimate landscape".

LOOK WHAT THE GOVERNMENT BYPASSED THEN...

The Inquiry was not allowed to examine the need for the bypass, or alternatives to it. They were missing a lot of other information too. Is this democracy?

LOOK WHAT THE GOVERNMENT IS BYPASSING NOW...

A lot has changed since 1988. Look below to discover just how much.

BYPASSING OFFICIAL ADVICE

- The Government's Standing Advisory Committee on Trunk Roads Assessment concludes that new roads can generate more traffic in three types of case. The Newbury bypass fits two of them.
- In 1994, the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution reported that the unrelenting growth in traffic represents "possibly the greatest environmental threat facing the UK", and recommended that targets should be set to reduce car use and increase other forms of transport.
- The National Rivers Authority objects to the design of the road's proposed river crossings.
- The Government's Highways Agency admits that "For local traffic [in Newbury] the urban area around the A34 is congested and will remain so on completion of the bypass".
- The Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution recommends that the Government "Investigate whether some towns and villages could obtain most of the benefits of a bypass more cost-effectively and with less environmental damage, through traffic management measures".
- The Highways Agency admits that, if the bypass attracts 20% extra traffic (as is likely), then the benefits of the bypass for most of Newbury would last only five to seven years after the road opens.
- English Heritage designates the 1st Battle of Newbury (1643) Civil War battlefield site as one of the most important battlefields in the country. The road goes through it.
- The Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution recommends that all transport policy decisions "be based on the identification and pursuit of the Best Practicable Environmental Option".

BYPASSING GOVERNMENT POLICY

- The Government launches its 'Great Transport Debate' to help develop a sustainable transport policy.
- The Department of the Environment issues Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 (PPG13), which advises local authorities to reduce growth in the length and number of motorised journeys, to encourage alternative means

of travel with less environmental impact, and to reduce reliance on the private car.

- In 1993, the Government cancels the proposed trunk road through Oxleas Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest because it fails to meet the "high environmental standards we [the Department of Transport] now apply to new road schemes".
- In 1992, John Major signs the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, which commits nations to conserve their range of wildlife habitats and species.
- The European Union's directive on the conservation of wildlife habitats and species enters into force. Species and habitats that need to be protected are found on the route of the bypass.
- The Government's Sustainable Development Plan emphasises the importance of managing traffic demand, and cutting traffic levels.
- The Government publishes the report of its Biodiversity Steering Group. The report proposes targets for the conservation of many rare animals and plants. Several are found along the route.
- A Berkshire County Council transport strategy expresses four main themes: "cycling and walking, public transport, parking policy, and traffic management and constraint". Building new roads is not one.

BYPASSING RESPECTED WILDLIFE AND HERITAGE ORGANISATIONS

- The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds opposes the road.
- The British Council of Archaeology opposes the road.
- The World Wide Fund for Nature opposes the road.
- The Wildlife Trusts opposes the road.

BYPASSING PUBLIC OPINION

- The Government responds to 'widespread public concern' and in December 1994 began a one-year-long review of the road. The review was held in total secrecy, with no public participation, and cut short by almost six months. The decision to proceed was announced three hours before Dr Mawhinney left his post as Secretary of State for Transport.

● In February 1996, over 7000 people join a peaceful protest walk along part of the bypass route. This is the biggest anti-roads rally the UK has ever seen.

● In 1995, a local questionnaire survey in the Newbury area finds that 70% of local businesses who responded oppose building the road before alternatives are tried.

BYPASSING COMMON SENSE

- Independent transport consultants analyse official transport figures and conclude that the road will provide 5-7 years' benefit before traffic rises to the present level.
- Friends of the Earth use the threat of legal action to force the Highways Agency to release figures that "justify" the road. The figures reveal that the bypass will save off-peak vehicles (the majority of drivers) only 2 minutes on a north-south trip via Newbury.
- Highways Agency figures reveal that 70% of the traffic on the existing A34 in Newbury is local traffic. The bypass will not relieve the congestion caused by it.
- Friends of the Earth commissions independent transport consultants (who have also advised the Government) to work out alternatives. Proposals have been drawn up to relieve Newbury's congestion. These could be implemented at a fraction of the cost of the road, and with no damage to protected countryside.
- It emerges that the Midlands to Southampton railway line can be upgraded to take many of the freight vehicles that drive through Newbury for £30-50 million. A convenient service can be introduced in the time it would take to build the bypass.
- Government research shows that levels of low-level ozone, the pollutant most linked to asthma, are often higher away from major roads. The population of Newbury cannot expect relief from this pollutant as a result of the bypass.

BYPASSING LEGAL CONTROLS?

- Complaints are made to the European Commission over the British Government's failure to properly assess the environmental impacts of the road in accordance with European law.
- The European Commission's Ombudsman decides to admit a complaint that could lead to formal proceedings against the Government for breaches of environmental directives.
- Despite protection under European law, bat roosting sites are removed by contractors.
- 12 sites of archeological significance have been discovered in the path of the road. One in the Lambourn valley with mesolithic remains, is believed to be of national importance.

BUT THE ROAD DOES NOT BYPASS THE NATION'S HERITAGE

● In 1995, the River Lambourn is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The road goes over the SSSI and will obliterate adjacent marshland nature reserve and flood plain habitats under embankments nearly 200 metres wide.

● In 1995, the River Kennet is recognised as the most biologically diverse river in lowland England and is duly designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The road goes over the SSSI and obliterates adjacent floodplain habitats under embankments nearly 200 metres wide. Further habitat is lost to gravel pits dug to build the road.

● The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds recommends that Selsmore Common Site of Special Scientific Interest be protected under the European Union's 'birds directive' because of the nightjars that live there.

● New research demonstrates that traffic noise prevents songbirds from breeding up to one kilometre from main roads.

● Because there is no proper biological survey, colonies of dormice living in on the route of the bypass are not found until six years after the decision to build the road is taken. Dormice are now rare, and are protected under British and European conservation laws.

● A rare snail (*Vertigo moulinsiana*), is found in large numbers near the route in what could be its British stronghold. The snails are protected under European conservation law, but could be affected by changes to their marshland habitat if the road is built.

● Badgers and their sets are protected from disturbance by the law. Despite earlier surveys by the contractors working for the Highways Agency, badgers and their sets are found on the route during initial clearance work.

● Despite protection under European law, bat roosting sites are removed by contractors.

● 12 sites of archeological significance have been discovered in the path of the road. One in the Lambourn valley with mesolithic remains, is believed to be of national importance.

THERE IS STILL TIME FOR COMMON SENSE TO PREVAIL

THERE IS
STILL TIME
TO STOP
THE NEWBURY
BYPASS BEING
BUILT

The main contract to build the road has not yet been awarded. There is still time to stop this madness. There are alternatives. They can relieve the congestion. They are much cheaper. They will not damage irreplaceable wildlife, countryside or historic sites. They could reduce pollution, not increase it.

We believe the Government should listen to reason, follow official advice and implement its own policies. We believe the Government should halt the road. We believe the alternatives should be tried first.

If you think like we do, please do something now. Please ask your MP to take up this

urgent matter. Ask them to press for a suspension of work, and for a proper environmental impact assessment to be carried out whilst alternative transport solutions are implemented.

Please write also to Sir George Young, the Secretary of State for Transport, Department of Transport, 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 3EB, and urge him to invest in the effective alternatives. And save tens of millions of pounds of public money, and the nation's precious heritage. You can write to your MPs at the House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. If you are unsure who your MP is, then call the House of Commons on 0171 219 3000.

Providing information and materials (like this advert) to keep people informed of the facts behind the Newbury Bypass is very costly. Please send your donations in support of this campaign to:

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Blair presents Labour as the homeowner's saviour

By JILL SHERMAN, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

TONY BLAIR outlined plans yesterday to rescue people from negative equity and to expose mortgage lenders that charge the highest commission fees.

He presented Labour as champion of the homeowner saying that the Tories were now the party of "repossessions, broken dreams and falling house values".

The Labour leader told a conference in London: "Many of the people who have tried to fulfil their dream have been let down. Homeowners kept their side of the contract. The Tories just tore it up."

He condemned bad housing advice, saying that some people had been sold unsuitable mortgages, often unaware that salespeople had earned extra commission for pushing a particular type of loan. "That situation has to change," he said.

"Lenders have nothing to fear from letting their customers know exactly what the costs are for the services they provide. They should publish full information on charges and commissions so that consumers know where they stand." Labour officials said that this could lead to league tables of mortgage-lenders, showing which levied the highest charges.

Mr Blair said that there was also a strong case for bringing mortgages under the Financial Services Act to ensure that customers were guaranteed adequate advice. He also said that people should be able to borrow a loan covering the full cost of their house, plus the negative equity from their previous home. But he made clear that borrowers would have to reassure lenders that they had a good repayment record, that they were in stable employment and could meet the new repayments.

"It is not a scheme suitable for everyone, but it could be a further mechanism which would help get the market moving again."

Mr Blair called for more flexible mortgage schemes, saying that he welcomed life-style mortgages that allowed "payment holidays" to cover the birth of a child. He also favoured avoiding repossession by the increased use of "flexible tenure" schemes, where building societies lend funds to a housing association so that it could buy a property and allow the occupiers to stay as tenants.

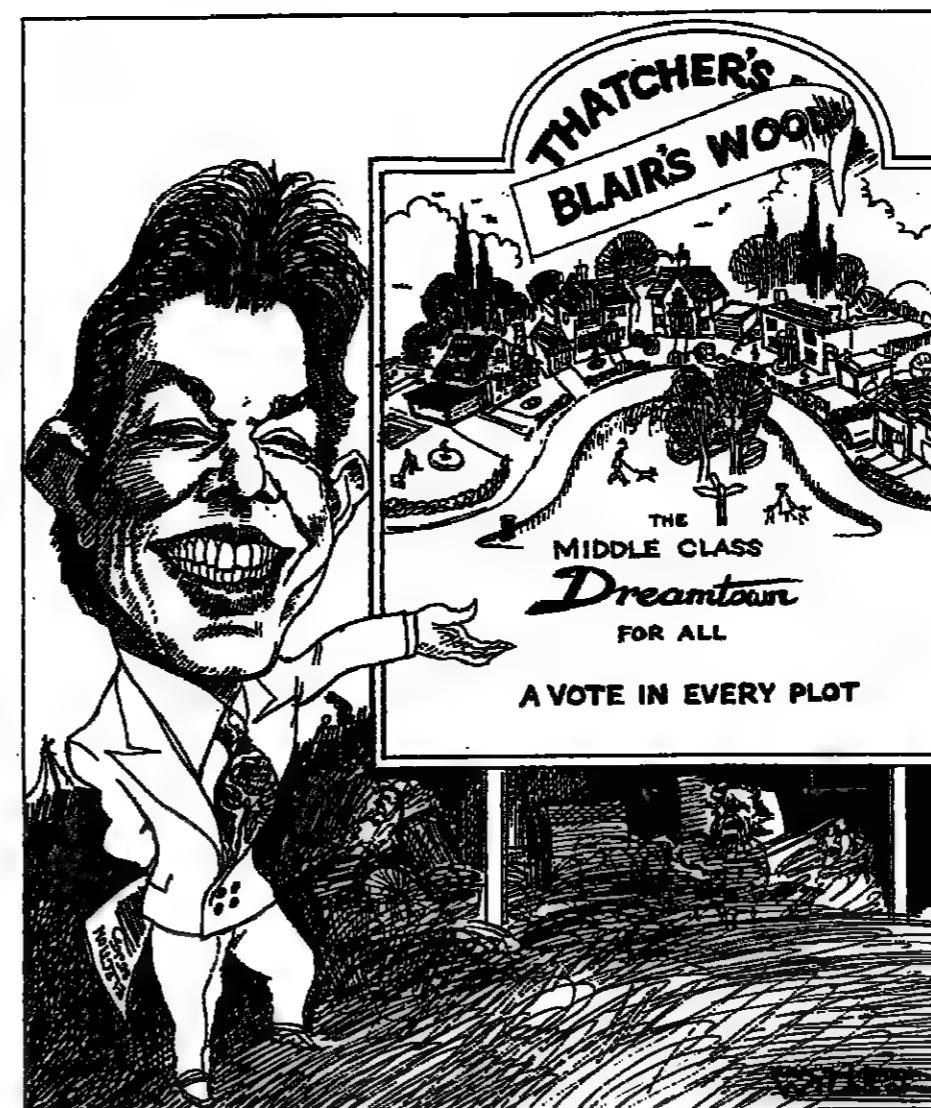
He made clear, however, that he was not turning his back on council housing. "I want to set out a picture of housing in which Labour supports the aspiration of the majority of people to own their own homes and to have a healthy, properly run social and private rented sector for those who either cannot afford to buy or who choose not to."

Mr Blair said that the Tories were now the "home-wreckers' party", who had pushed 1.7 million homeowners into negative equity, while cutting mortgage tax relief and benefits for unemployed homeowners. It was the party of "negative equity, repossession, broken dreams and falling house values".

Later in the Commons, Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, said that negative equity had dropped by 26 per cent since 1992. He claimed that leading building societies were already running such schemes.

The Abbey National, the Cheltenham and Gloucester, the Alliance and Leicester, the Halifax — they have all got the schemes in existence that the leader of the Labour Party says his Government would introduce if he ever got elected," Mr Heseltine said. "They are already there doing it. The market has spoken. Tory government works."

Mortgage lenders and housebuilders gave only a cautious welcome to Mr Blair's proposals. Roger Humber, director of the Housebuilder Federation, said: "Mr Blair's speech seemed to address the symptoms and not the causes of the housing market's problems. What owner-occupiers need, irrespective of the party in power, is interest rate stability and the return of job security. We don't need rabbit-out-of-the-hat tricks from anyone."



Fraud teams to focus on urban claimants

By JAMES LANDALE

HUNDREDS of fraud investigators are preparing to sweep the country in a crackdown on benefit cheats, the Government announced yesterday.

The investigators will concentrate on three or four urban areas each month in an effort to cut the £2.5 billion lost to social security fraud every year. Much of the fraud involves housing benefit, income support, and unemployment benefit. Free telephone hotlines will be set up for the public to inform officials about suspected fraud.

Peter Lilley, the Social Security Secretary, told the Commons: "The prime objective will be to encourage those who have drifted into abusing the system to put their claims right, then to crack down hard on those who fail to take the opportunity of coming clean."

Although Mr Lilley did not say which areas would be visited by the investigators, claimants will be given two weeks' warning. "Those who do come forward voluntarily would be very unlikely to be prosecuted," he said.

Tories in turmoil over Goldsmith's referendum ploy

By NICHOLAS WOOD, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE billionaire Anglo-French financier Sir James Goldsmith has plunged the Tory party into turmoil with his demand that MPs and candidates say where they stand on a referendum on Europe.

Sir James has formed the Referendum Party, backed with a campaign budget of at least £10 million, and is threatening to contest every mainland seat where no other main party candidate is committed to a referendum. He has more than 400 potential candidates waiting in the wings.

Tory MPs in the 90 most marginal seats, those with majorities up to 7,000, are deeply alarmed by his move. They fear that a referendum candidate, backed by national publicity, could cost them a 1,000 votes or more and make their seat more vulnerable to a Labour swing. Senior Tories have approached John Major and Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, urging them to clarify the Government's stance on a referendum, at present no more than a "possibility".

Robert Key, a Tory MP with an 8,973 majority in Salisbury, summed up the predicament of many backbenchers. "A number of MPs and their associations are anxiously awaiting guidance. If it is not forthcoming soon, I feel that I will have to go my own way. I have already publicly said I would be in favour of a referendum on a single currency, and I need to know whether the Government intends to go further than that."

An ad hoc group of senior ministers is trying to establish

a clearer line in time for the debate on the Europe White Paper later this month.

Labour MPs are far more relaxed, knowing that fewer of their potential supporters are likely to be swayed by the referendum promise. "Goldsmith doesn't strike the cold fear in our hearts that he does in the Tories," a Shadow Cabinet member said.

Sir James wrote to 1,062 MPs and candidates from all the main parties a few weeks ago, asking where they stood on a referendum. But Tory MPs are not looking forward to giving an answer. With the Government sitting on the fence, many want firm guidance before committing themselves in print.

Conservative Central Office has intervened, telling MPs to hold fire pending a Cabinet review of policy. But ministers have yet to agree a response as Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, holds out against a referendum.

Sir James's letter was accompanied by a two-page statement of his party's aims. He wants a referendum not just on a single currency or the outcome of this year's inter-governmental conference, but on the Maastricht treaty itself — a demand regarded as impractical even by some hard-line sceptics.

He is coy about the responses he has received to his letter. But close associates say there have been many and the "overwhelming majority" support his demand for a referendum on the whole Maastricht package.

At least one Tory need have no fears about a Goldsmith challenge. Sir Teddy Taylor, MP for Southend East, said: "Sir James through his tenacity and hard work, is slowly driving the party towards the only possible solution to our European worries and divisions — namely, letting the people decide for themselves.

"It's simply no good to talk about a referendum on a single currency. We need a referendum on whether the people of Britain wish to remain in the European Union. My own feeling is that they are fed up to the teeth with the EU."



Openness 'must wait'

By NIGEL WILLIAMSON, WHITEHALL CORRESPONDENT

THE passing of a freedom of information Act, one of Labour's few commitments to legislation, may have to wait if the party wins the general election.

Peter Mandelson, Labour's Civil Service spokesman, said yesterday that the commitment could only be met "in time". He told a seminar organised by the Campaign

IN PARLIAMENT

YESTERDAY in the Commons: questions to defence ministers and the Prime Minister, with Michael Howard, the Deputy Prime Minister, standing in for Mr Major; questions on Scotland, fraud and the sale of Cheltenham Barracks, Cheltenham; the Lord Broadcasting Bill, report stage; debate on the Commons' backbench Budget Office questions; Community Care Direct Payments Bill, reading; Education School Classes Regulations Bill, second reading; debate on university spending cuts; calls greater awareness of development needs; Second reading of the Education Bill, second reading.

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Buchanan threat to divide party on abortion issue

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

PAT BUCHANAN has built a following so passionate that he could wreak havoc at this August's Republican convention in San Diego if his demands are ignored.

The populist insurgent has rallied religious conservatives with his uncompromising stand against abortion in any circumstances and is threatening mayhem if the Republican presidential nominee chooses a pro-choice running mate like Colin Powell, or adopts anything short of a rigidly anti-abortion platform.

"There would be a walk-out at the convention. You would split the party. You would probably have embryonic right-to-life parties all over America," Mr Buchanan said.

The party's problem is that capitulating to Mr Buchanan's demands would alienate a centre that is the key to winning the White House and abhors Mr Buchanan's moral absolutism. A recent Gallup poll showed just 12 per cent of voters share his unconditional opposition to abortion.

In 1992 Mr Buchanan drove millions of moderates into the Democratic camp with a conviction speech demanding a "cultural war for the soul of America" and many Republicans still blame him for President Bush's defeat. This year, by winning more than a quarter of the vote in every contest, he has not only earned another prime-time speech in San Diego but will command a much larger number of committed delegates.

It is a prospect that appeals to the pragmatic Robert Dole, who would love to have General Powell on his ticket, has rallied himself in knots on the abortion issue, and fervently wishes it would go away.

During a debate in South Carolina last Thursday, Mr Dole first told a questioner he

would oppose an abortion if she was made pregnant by a rapist, then contradicted himself. On a chat show last Saturday he had to admit he would support his daughter if she chose to have an abortion. On Sunday he agreed abor-



Pat Buchanan gets down to grassroots campaigning among young supporters at a rally in Roswell, Georgia

Aged Southern senator not yet over the Hill

FROM TOM RHODES
IN WASHINGTON

BORN 37 years after the end of the Civil War and elected Governor of South Carolina when President Clinton was born, Strom Thurmond has straddled the 20th-century history of his state like an eccentric and canankerous colossus.

This week, at 93, he becomes the oldest member yet to serve in Congress. And he has vowed to run for an eighth term during which he would not merely assume the mantle of the longest serving senator in American history but also that of centenarian.

In addition to his chairmanship of the armed services committee, he is president *pro tempore* of the Senate, placing him third in the presidential succession after Al Gore, the Vice-President, and Newt Gingrich, the House Speaker.

As Robert Dole, the 72-year-old senator

from Kansas, defended his own age to the South Carolina electorate last week, Mr Thurmond used the backdrop of the state Republican primary to hint that he was ready to stand again. He told a crowd of supporters that he was not yet in a position to announce his candidature.

"But you won't be disappointed," said Mr Thurmond. "There's a few liberals running around saying I shouldn't run again. What counts is not age but performance, getting the job done. What do you think?"

The rapturous applause that greeted his speech suggested that, for the gathered loyalists at least, Strom Thurmond has every chance of success. For years, they have heard stories about his health: his orange hair implants and, most famously, his penchant for taking young beauty queens as wives. The four Thurmond children were born when he was between the ages of 69 and 74.

It is all part of the idiosyncratic Thurmond legend, the man who has been both a Democrat and a Republican, a fierce segregationist who became the first Southern senator to employ black staff and now a conservative with a record of support for civil rights.

His most striking attributes were evident from the start. He has always been an indefatigable campaigner, never missing the opportunity to shake hands, learning and remembering every name and spending spare moments writing messages of condolence and congratulations to constituents.

There has been political courage, too. Having initially praised the records of Roosevelt and Truman, Mr Thurmond then ran against Truman in 1948 as the presidential candidate of the segregationist States' Rights Party, the Dixiecrats. It was an act of disloyalty which placed him forever in the Democratic doghouse.

gades" would do well to remember the last time cultural conservatives won a constitutional amendment lacking broad popular support. Prohibition was introduced in 1920, repealed 13 disastrous years later, and the Religious Right has only just recovered its political influence.

□ States vote: Two hundred and fifty-nine delegates were being decided yesterday. Eight states were holding primaries, Washington and Minnesota. (AP)

Americans uncover Russian diamond plot

BY GILES WHITTELL

AN INTERNATIONAL diamond scam in which Russian conman appears to have robbed his Government of \$171 million (£110 million) has been shut down by authorities in San Francisco.

The story of Andrei Kozlenok and the diamond factory he set up in California is still mired in conspiracy theories and dark rumours of KGB involvement. What is certain is that Russia is suing in a San Francisco federal court for the return of a haul of gold and diamonds embezzled there by Mr Kozlenok.

In a racket worthy of a

James Bond villain, Mr Kozlenok, a dapper "entrepreneur" in his 30s, used \$1.3 million in Russian Government funds to set up a diamond-cutting plant in San Francisco in 1992.

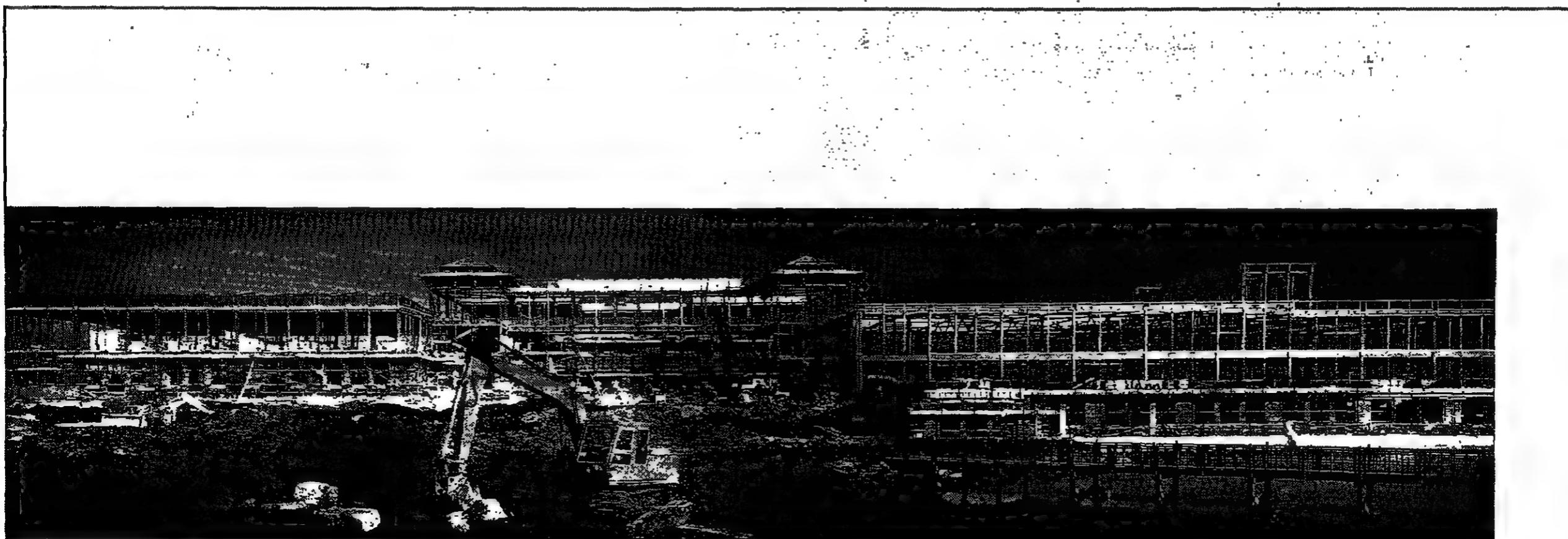
His plan, reported to have been approved by Moscow, was to cut and polish rough Russian diamonds and use them as collateral for a \$50 million credit line from an American bank for the Russian Government. Instead Mr Kozlenok and two Armenian accomplices sold the diamonds and went on a \$30 million spending spree.

The authorities were also forced to proceed slowly because of the gang's suspicion of outsiders and their skill at covering their tracks. Robbers were often carried put with the help of corrupt insiders, according to Mark Merchant, an FBI official. Stolen chips would be loaded into stolen vans, then transferred to hired luxury cars less likely to attract police attention.

One suspect, Thach Ngoc Tran, 28, paid \$2.4 million into his bank account last year. He is now in custody.



Thurmond: has vowed to run for an eighth term



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Silicon Valley crime ring broken

FROM GILES WHITTELL
IN LOS ANGELES

COMPUTER chips worth more on the black market than gold or cocaine were at the heart of a crime ring brought to its knees by undercover agents working in one of the world's most lucrative robbery districts, Silicon Valley.

After an 18-month operation codenamed West Chips, the FBI has arrested 50 suspects, most of them Vietnamese immigrants. As profits and asset values have soared among computer firms in the southern San Francisco Bay area known as Silicon Valley, organised gangs have used increasingly ruthless methods to steal chips worth millions on the international market.

One undercover agent who risked his life infiltrating a Vietnamese-American gang secretly recorded one of its members planning a robbery: "We'll take this guy over here," the gangster said, "and the first thing we'll do is cut his ear off in front of everybody. If that doesn't work, we'll cut off his other ear. And if that doesn't work, we'll shoot him."

Companies such as Hewlett-Packard and Silicon Graphics are among those targeted by the gangs, which have earned up to \$500 million (£330 million) in two years. But agents planning operation West Chips have been hampered by the reluctance of some firms to report robberies for fear of upsetting their insurers and shareholders, the San Jose police department said.

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Editor's
limbal

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Independent voice silenced before election

Editor's sacking muzzles Zimbabwe newspaper

FROM JAN RAATH IN HARARE

DEMOCRACY and press freedom in Zimbabwe have suffered a serious setback with the sacking of the editor of the country's only independent newspaper by its nervous proprietor.

Trevor Ncube last week ended five years as editor of the *Financial Gazette*, during which time the Government was repeatedly humiliated by the exposure of top-level corruption and incompetence. Such stories were ignored by other Zimbabwean newspapers, nearly all of which are state-owned.

Mr Ncube's departure, and the subsequent muzzling of the *Gazette* by Elias Rusike, the chief executive of Modus Publications which owns the paper, mean that the campaign for presidential elections in two weeks' time is being reported here solely by newspapers which support the ruling Zanu (PF) party. Observers say that the rampant abuse of office by senior

politicians can be expected to increase without the risk of exposure by the *Gazette*.

Modus Publications is facing bankruptcy and Modus House, in a rundown part of Harare, is for sale.

Mr Ncube, 34, was suspended a month ago for publishing a Reuters report that said President Mugabe's aircraft had tried to queue-jump other planes carrying heads of state to Lesotho in January.

"Instead of defending his editor, Mr Rusike silenced him," said Iden Wetherell, formerly the newspaper's leading columnist. He resigned last week after his popular satirical column, *Muckraker*, was dropped.

After Mr Ncube left, Mr Rusike personally began scrutinising stories. He issued a memorandum that the paper was to establish "a Zimbabwean identity", which *Gazette* journalists believe means following the Zanu (PF) line. They have been told to

focus on business affairs, to treat security stories "cautiously" and to pay more attention to the speeches of ministers. For the first time in its history, the *Gazette* carried advertising which congratulated Mr Mugabe on his seventy-second birthday last month.

The affair completely traumatised Mr Rusike, and he couldn't take any more," a senior staff member said.

Modus now owes nearly £2.5 million to the state-owned bank which backed Mr Rusike and is calling in substantial repayments. The Cabinet has discussed the debt several times, according to financial sources.

Mr Ncube said he had no evidence of the Government bringing direct influence to bear on Mr Rusike, but added it was "difficult to find another reason" for the censorship.

The *Gazette*'s advertising and circulation are expected to plummet and the paper's future is regarded as uncertain, even if the Government decides to prop it up with easy repayment terms.



Mr Mandela prepares to talk to reporters yesterday as speculation grows about his health

**Mandela
vows to
complete
his term**

FROM INIGO GILMORE
IN JOHANNESBURG

PRESIDENT MANDELA yesterday dismissed speculation that he may leave office before the completion of his five-year term in 1999.

He was responding to a report from Washington published in South Africa's *Business Day* newspaper, which claimed there were growing indications that he might retire as early as this year.

"No, I am hearing that for the first time," Mr Mandela told reporters at a private clinic here where he is undergoing three days of medical tests. "There is no question of me continuing beyond 1999, but I have not been told that I should step down, so I will hold on until 1999."

Mr Mandela decided to undergo tests after speculation about his health sent shudders through the money markets. The check-up has forced him to postpone a visit to Angola, where he was to meet President dos Santos and Jonas Savimbi, the Unita leader.

Patten pleads for council

FROM JONATHAN MIRSKY
IN HONG KONG

CHRIS PATTEN, the Hong Kong Governor, yesterday followed up John Major's speech warning Peking not to breach its legal obligations by urging China to reverse its decision to abolish the colony's Legislative Council and truncate its Bill of Rights when it resumes sovereignty in 1997.

Responding to suggestions in the Communist-controlled local press that Mr Major's statement would damage British-Chinese relations, the Governor urged Peking "to stand by the promises made to Hong Kong on human rights... and on the development of representative institutions".

In reply to Chinese statements that Hong Kong's first fully elected legislature would be terminated two years short of its term, Mr Patten acknowledged that a reversal by Peking "would take some effort of will", but said it would create "overwhelming relief" in Hong Kong.

The Governor described Mr Major's speech guaranteeing visa-free access to Britain after 1997 for Hong Kong passport holders, offering passports to war wives and widows, and guaranteeing the safety of non-ethnic Chinese, as one of the most forceful "ever made by any British politician".

Arms tests unnerve Taiwan

FROM JAMES PRINGLE
IN PEKING

CHINA'S new round of missile tests starting on Friday in the Taiwan Straits in advance of Taiwan's presidential elections on March 23 are part of a war of nerves intended to show how easily the mainland could blockade the island's main ports, diplomats said here yesterday.

China's announcement of the one-week exercises came only hours before the annual parliamentary session was convened yesterday, and provoked regional concern that, through accident or overreaction, the war games could go seriously wrong.

Stock market prices fell 62 points in Taipei and many ordinary Taiwanese reacted with concern. A number of fearful civilians living on the tiny Taiwan-controlled island of Wu Chiu, just a mile off the China coast, fled to Taiwan.

In Peking, the Foreign Ministry said the tests were "just normal exercises for safeguarding the country's sovereignty and integrity".

But Taiwan says China has massed up to 150,000 troops in preparation for the exercises and claims they are an attempt to destabilise the country before the poll in which President Lee is the front-runner.

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SKY
NO TURNING BACK

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Arafat undermined by ferocity of response to Arab guerrilla attacks as ceasefire offer is rejected

Israel puts West Bank under military siege

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

ISRAELI troops and secret service agents went on the offensive against Islamic militants yesterday, barricading Palestinian residents inside hundreds of West Bank villages and towns, sealing at least ten family homes with welding equipment and placing many Hamas suspects in internment-style administrative detention.

The entire area was placed under military siege. The protests of Yassir Arafat, the Palestine Liberation Organisation chairman, were ignored by a Government plunged into crisis after 57 deaths from suicide bombers in the past ten days.

Top Israeli security sources said that even tougher action could be expected in the coming days and Ehud Barak, the hardline Foreign Minister and former Chief of Staff, made it clear that Israel was even prepared to strike inside Arab countries which gave sanctuary to Hamas.

Bomber was trainee teacher

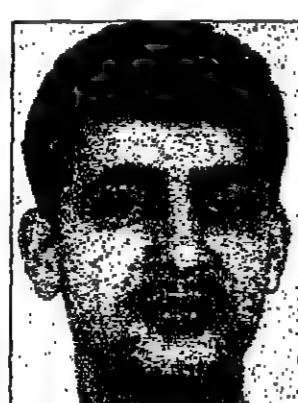
FROM ROSS DUNN
IN RAMALLAH, WEST BANK

LONG before Raed Shaghrouba blew himself up on the Jerusalem bus on Sunday, he was known at the Ramallah Men's Training Centre for his devotion to Islam.

Shaghrouba, 24, could often be heard on the teacher-training campus, singing the Muslim call to prayers and leading other students in verses from the Koran.

Another student at the college, Samair Bakrie, 18, said: "I did not know him personally but I knew his face. He was well-known for his good behaviour and intelligence."

Worried that there were more students planning to become human bombs, the Palestinian Authority this week raided the institution and arrested at least 21 people. They included Mustafa Abu Wardah, who Yassir Arafat, the Palestine Liberation Organisation chairman, told diplomats was responsible for



Shaghrouba: "Known for devotion to Islam"

recruiting bombers for at least two of the recent attacks.

Mr Bakrie said most of his fellow students came from refugee camps, traditional breeding grounds of Palestinian terrorism. "I think the main reason for the people to commit such an act is the frustration they live in. The resistance camps lack any infrastructure, and the economic

situation is very bad, and all these frustrations lead to explosions," he said.

He believed there would be further suicide bombings if Israel continued to punish Palestinians collectively.

The college was quiet yesterday after the raid by the Palestinian Authority. Journalists were denied entry, but some off-campus students complained they were being victimised and denied that the institution had become a base for terrorism.

However, even Mr Bakrie, a quietly-spoken and modest young man who does not support the killing of civilians, was not willing to blame fellow Palestinians for the violence. He said Israel was ultimately responsible for creating the conditions for suicide bombings by oppressing Palestinians.

He said he understood, even if he did not support, the actions of Hamas, the Islamic resistance movement, which has claimed responsibility.

The crackdown continued despite a new conditional ceasefire offer by the military wing of Hamas which, in response to a call from its political leaders, pledged to halt bombings until July if action against its members ceased. Israel rejected the

leaders, to replace Shimon Peres as Defence Minister. Pressure was also growing for a government of national unity including members of the right-wing Likud opposition to conduct the new war against Islamic militants.

The Israeli Army an-

added. In another village, Burka, near the largest West Bank town of Nablus, 600 male residents between the ages of 14 and 50 were forced to squat for hours in the sunshine as mass interrogations took place. Elsewhere, relatives of suicide bombers were arrested to face possible deportation.

Israeli television, in an attempt to boost morale among the Jewish population, was allowed to film as homes of the dead bombers were welded shut while heaps of personal belongings were tossed into piles outside. At least eight homes will be destroyed today.

Strict curfews were imposed on at least five villages and one refugee camp. House-to-house searches began at dawn, with suspected supporters of Hamas and Islamic Jihad driven away blindfolded. The West Bank was effectively cut off from Arab east Jerusalem.

Although for the moment the heavily-armed troops remained just outside those West Bank towns that are under Palestinian authority, Mr Arafat's standing was severely undermined by the ferocity of the Israeli clampdown, which left hundreds of thousands of Palestinians short of bread, petrol and other essentials. This goes directly against the [peace] agreement," the elected Palestinian President said in Gaza.

Mr Peres, the embattled Prime Minister who also holds the defence portfolio, belatedly bowing to popular pressure to harden his attitude to the Arabs, made clear that the Israeli withdrawal from Hebron scheduled for later this month would be postponed until the PLO deletes clauses in its covenant which calls for the destruction of Israel. Few observers considered his new, hard-line sufficient to save him from losing the May 29 general election to right-wing Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu.

The funerals of the 13 victims of Monday's attack in Tel Aviv continued yesterday. Many of those killed in the explosion were children. The general feeling that the era of the dove has again been replaced by that of the hawk was summed up in a cartoon in *Haaretz*, the leading Tel Aviv daily paper. It depicted a dove lying in a hospital bed, its head and limbs bandaged. "Last week's attacks," is written in its arm. Scissors labelled "This week's attacks" are cutting the intravenous blood supply.

Mr Oz, writing in the mass circulation Hebrew paper *Maariv* amid horrific colour photographs of the latest dev-

astation in the centre of Tel Aviv, addressed an open letter to a Palestinian acquaintance which began: "Shalom. Israel is our homeland. Palestine is your homeland. Whoever cannot live with these two simple facts is either blind or evil."

Mr Oz added: "There are those among us who are considering ideas such as the imposition of one-sided borders, the erection of a fortress wall between the two peoples and the complete severance of the two populations."

Another leading pro-peace commentator, Natan Barnea, who lost his 20-year-old son, Yona, in the first of the two attacks on Jerusalem's No 18 bus, went even further in suggesting in the biggest selling Hebrew daily, *Yediot Achronot*, that Shimon Peres, the embattled Prime Minister,

could have saved his flagging reputation by pressing a comprehensive plan to separate Arab from Jew.

"This would, perhaps, involve the establishment of a Berlin Wall within the Old City of Jerusalem and the evacuation of settlements."

Yoel Markus, a popular political commentator, wrote in *Haaretz*: "Hamas is showing us a 'New Middle East' that is completely different from what this Government depicted."

Another top commentator, Yosef Lapid, told readers of *Maariv* that his mind was made up and that the harshest reaction against the Palestinians was necessary, action that would make Israel's ruthless moves against the Palestinian intifada look like "child's play".

War and welfare on Hamas agenda

BY CHRISTOPHER WALKER

SINCE Hamas was founded in the occupied Gaza Strip in 1987 by Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, now ailing in an Israeli jail, the organisation has expanded into a well-financed welfare, as well as guerrilla, group. Its wings are notionally split in a way similar to Sinn Fein and the Provisional IRA.

According to a senior Israeli army officer who has studied the group for the past four years, Hamas can count on about \$60 million (£40 million) a year in private donations. About 85 per cent of it is used to run schools, medical centres, hospitals, youth clubs and mosques.

"Without the support and activity of the civilian wing, the military wing could not exist," the officer said, producing diagrams to outline Hamas financing. He said that only 15 per cent of the income went to the military wing because the winning of the 'hearts and minds' of the Palestinian people was regarded as the prime aim.

Britain has rejected Israeli allegations that \$10 million is channelled to Hamas annually from London, either in the form of donations to Islamic charities or in money laundered through London from other parts of the world. Britain has also rejected appeals to outlaw Hamas supporters in Britain.

Although much of Hamas's ideological inspiration comes from Iran, half of its annual budget is estimated by the Israelis to emanate from the Gulf, notably Saudi Arabia. In the West, Britain and America are the main routes for funds which the Israeli military authorities claim they are unable to block because, ostensibly, they are intended for legal Islamic charities.

The deep divisions inside Hamas are attributed mainly to a clash between its leadership abroad, which tends to be more hardline, and leadership within Gaza and the West Bank, which is keener to make a political accommodation with Yassir Arafat, leader of the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

The senior Israeli officer told reporters at a briefing on Hamas that the grouping specialised in promoting moderation at the political level, while carrying out grotesque and indiscriminate terror attacks via its military wing. The parallels with the IRA are obvious, with one notable exception: the Provincials do not favour suicide attacks and, most of the time, they give coded — if imperfect — warnings," one diplomat said.



Israeli guard a man arrested in Hebron after two Jewish settlers were stabbed

Hawks drown out doves as cry goes up for a 'Berlin Wall'

BY OUR MIDDLE EAST CORRESPONDENT

LED BY AMOS OZ, THE NOVELIST AND, IN THE PAST, THE MOST ARTICULATE EXponent OF THE PEACE POLICY, ISRAEL YESTERDAY EMBARKED ON AN UNPRECEDENTED ROUND OF SOUL-SEARCHING AFTER THE FIVE ISLAMIC TERROR ATTACKS THAT HAVE ROCKED THE JEWISH STATE IN EIGHT DAYS.

THE GENERAL FEELING THAT THE ERA OF THE DOVE HAS AGAIN BEEN REPLACED BY THAT OF THE HAWK WAS SUMMED UP IN A CARTOON IN *HAARETZ*, THE LEADING TEL AVIV DAILY PAPER. IT DEPICTED A DOVE LYING IN A HOSPITAL BED, ITS HEAD AND LIMBS BANDAGED. "LAST WEEK'S ATTACKS," IS WRITTEN IN ITS ARM. SCISSORS LABELED "THIS WEEK'S ATTACKS" ARE CUTTING THE INTRAVENOUS BLOOD SUPPLY.

MR OZ, WRITING IN THE MASS CIRCULATION HEBREW PAPER *MAARIV* AMID HORRIFIC COLOUR PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE LATEST DEV-

ASTATION IN THE CENTRE OF TEL AVIV, ADDRESSED AN OPEN LETTER TO A PALESTINIAN ACQUAINTANCE WHICH BEGAN: "SHALOM. ISRAEL IS OUR HOMELAND. PALESTINE IS YOUR HOMELAND. WHOEVER CANNOT LIVE WITH THESE TWO SIMPLE FACTS IS EITHER BLIND OR EVIL."

MR OZ ADDED: "THESE ARE THOSE AMONG US WHO ARE CONSIDERING IDEAS SUCH AS THE IMPOSITION OF ONE-SIDED BORDERS, THE CREATION OF A FORTRESS WALL BETWEEN THE TWO PEOPLES AND THE COMPLETE SEVERANCE OF THE TWO POPULATIONS."

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It is, by any account, embarrassing — excruciatingly embarrassing. But it is so fascinating, too. Michael Barbour, senior education adviser to the Labour Party, Dean of New Initiatives (now there's a title) at London University's Institute of Education and champion of comprehensive education, has admitted that he will be sending his youngest daughter to a fee-paying school. The compelling part is not the decision, although it has added greatly to the gaiety of political pundits, but the reason he gives for it: his missus.

"Essentially," he explains, "the issue is that my wife, Karen, and I don't necessarily agree about education and politics." He freely admits he would have preferred his daughter to have gone to a comprehensive, as did his other daughters, but his wife strongly demurred, and "I respect her views".

Professor Barbour has been so honest about all of this that it's difficult to see how the inevitable charges of hypocrisy can stick. He has offered to resign as governor of Haggerston Girls School (which his daughter might have attended); he has made no effort to abrogate responsibility for the decision, claiming it to have been made "as a family"; and he makes no attempt to absolve himself, admitting that "every parent that [sic] opts out makes the improvement of state schools more difficult, because it spreads doubt about their quality".

Professor Barbour's account

Lessons in choosing schools

It is a dilemma being played out across the country, when one parent believes in state education and one in fee-paying schools

of his wife's firmness on the subject is convincing: she had not been impressed by the education his two older daughters had received at comprehensive schools and was determined that Alys, their youngest, should be given a better opportunity.

Esentially, this is the dilemma every parent who believes in the idea of state education, while quaking at what is actually on offer, faces. And, indeed, it is not just in essence that this particular drama is played out in homes across the country, but in almost exactly the same detail. In other words, one parent furiously argues for the principles of state education while the other says: "Darling, I couldn't agree more, but look at the reality: you can take care of your principles if you like, but I'm more worried about our angel's education."

In couples like these, how can the idealist win over the pragmatist? Children have a way of making only the concrete seem important: you don't after all — even if you are a senior educa-

tion adviser — want your daughter to get educated in theory, you want her to learn things in practice. And even if any doubts add to the efficacy of the state education on offer are out of proportion to what exists, how do you argue against a partner who is intransigent on the subject, without seeming like the most uncaring parent and high-handed spouse?

Perhaps it's just the company I keep, but I hear variations on this theme rehearsed over dinner parties regularly. Only the other day, I was sitting next to another Labour Party supremo, only one much more connected (Professor Barbour has, after all, also advised the Tory party on education) and much more highly connected at that, who was voicing exactly these concerns. He felt, he told me, that it was absolutely the duty of



Nigella Lawson

than they need to on account of them. And where do I stand? I think they're both right — and I don't know where that'll lead me in a few years hence.

These days we like to believe in a relationship not as a union of opposites, but an undifferentiated linking of kindred spirits. We live in an age of single issues politics where everything must be subjugated to one intolerant, intransigent belief. People now express horror that one could actually share a joke or a dinner table with someone whose political views one not merely disagrees with, but loathes, so it is beyond them that anyone could actually choose to live in fundamental political discord with someone else. But, of course, it happens: people can live happily with those whose views differ radically from their own.

I know many self-congratulatory left-wing people who are saved by their spouse's often criticised reactionary. How much easier it is, you see, to bang on about one's beliefs, one's integrity, one's ideals while knowing that, without impugning either oneself or the whole damn lot of them, one will not have to act on them. It's not hypocrisy; call it, rather, human nature. And it is, after all, the point of marriage to provide balance and to protect each of us from our own excesses.

Real Parma ham from Brussels?

TODAY, an EU commission is called on to consider whether countries should be allowed to use names of specific foodstuffs genetically. That is to say, should they allow manufacturers of cured ham from Manchester to call their product Parma ham, or must only ham from Parma pigs, cured in the time-honoured fashion, be allowed the name? Any sensible person should pray that the commissioners have the sense to stop Danish cheesemakers producing what they want to describe as feta, mozzarella or mad though it sounds. West Country cheddar.

Should they do so, I'm afraid the reception won't be exactly warm in this country. We seem to consider any regard for a foodstuff's integrity as barny Euro-rubbish and instantly decry it. But it does make a difference. Without any form of *appellation contrôlée*, the quality of what we are served in the name quickly deteriorates. In Italy, Parma ham means Parma ham, just as in France Puy lentils are indeed from Puy: the terms mean something. I happen to think that prosciutto di San Daniele is better than prosciutto di Parma: it's not that the name itself signifies the best, but that it signifies what it is. Over here, Parma ham is often used (not legally as yet) to describe all manner of hams that have never been anywhere near Italy let alone Parma, and it shows.

I ONCE tried to buy a good cheese sandwich in Somerset but it was impossible. Just because any old plasticky cheese can call itself cheddar doesn't mean it is cheddar. Furthermore, Danish mozzarella isn't mozzarella: it tastes different, it is different. Why should it be allowed to go by the same name? But maybe we get the cheeses we deserve. What a truly dreadful thought.

Time to give peace a chance

Martin Bell, the BBC's long-serving war reporter, has decided to hang up his flak jacket and plant geraniums in his upturned steel helmet

IT SOUNDS the easiest of decisions for a veteran war reporter to make, to forego the front lines forever, to hand in the flak jacket; retire the white suit, to upend the steel helmet and hang geraniums from it under the porch. So in a sense it is an easy decision, for the risks and dangers that go with the job have never held much appeal for me. I am not what is known in the trade as a "headbanger", one of those fearless characters who draw an extra charge of excitement for venturing into the cannon's mouth and staying there.

It is true that, against the usual style of TV reporters, I do not habitually duck and weave while addressing the camera under fire but that is to save energy, and because one can as easily duck into a bullet as away from one.

For weeks and months on end, especially in Bosnia, fear and trepidation have been my constant companions. I will gladly part with them for good, though I will admit to the satisfaction of survival at the end of a dangerous day — what Winston Churchill, an early practitioner, described as "the exhilaration of being shot at without result".

There remain some advantages to it, which fall far short of justifying an addiction, but which have kept me in the war zones when perhaps I should have quit. There is the privilege of witnessing history in the making, and the knowledge that television is, for the first time, contributing to its first draft. There is the inspiration of heroes — the heroism of ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances. There is the camaraderie of one's colleagues, an odd bunch and the strongest of people at the best of times, but the firmest of friends under fire.

There is, most of all, a different perception of what matters and what does not in our daily lives — a special sense of what not to take for



Thirty years' war: three decades after first encountering ethnic cleansing and war, in Nigeria and Vietnam, Martin Bell is still reporting on their consequences in Bosnia

granted. All of these will be hard to give up.

But the passage of time brings imperatives of its own. Even in the Gulf War I could not help noticing that, together with Philip Jacobson, who dispatches graced the pages of this newspaper and with whom I served alongside the 7th Armoured Brigade, I was the oldest man on the field of battle by six years; and that was five years ago. Today the joints creak under the weight of the body armour, so heavy that even soldiers are astonished by its turn of speed across open ground is not as fast as it used to be, and the 15-mile hike with backpack through enemy lines (even if it is wise, which I have always doubted) would these days test

'I don't duck and weave to camera under fire because one can as easily duck into a bullet as away from one'

my endurance to the limit. It has been a longish career, nearly 30 years long. My first experience of war was in Vietnam a few months later. I have found myself still reporting the consequences of both in Bosnia in 1996. And it was just before



Shot in Bosnia, Bell realised it was time for a change

flight of Ibos, in the summer of 1966. My first experience of war was in Vietnam a few months later. I have found myself still reporting the consequences of both in Bosnia in 1996. And it was just before

'Even in the Gulf War I couldn't help noticing that I was the oldest man on the field of battle by six years'

Christmas, while coming under fire at an illegal Croat roadblock outside Mrkonic Grad, that I concluded that the time had come for a change.

I have hung out with soldiers for a long time, and hope

ment plan, will be one last valedictory assignment to Bosnia next month. It will encompass the Implementation Force (Ifor) deadline known as "D plus 90", the final transfer of land and authority between the constituent parts of Bosnia under the Dayton agreement. It will (I hope) draw the line under peace of a kind, not peace with honour, but preferable to the only alternative, which is war without end.

I know very few of my war-zone colleagues who ever consciously set out to be war reporters. It is something that happens, rather like the weather, and we find ourselves caught up in it. We don't choose this career: it chooses us. But when it is over, what do we do next? For what else

are we even remotely qualified? This is my present predicament; and it is possible that journalists, like actors, can become so typecast as to be unemployable elsewhere.

I have had one notion, which I have duly floated in the appropriate circles, that since there is a general election campaign in the offing, and the language of elections is regularly conducted in the metaphors of warfare, why not go all the way and hire a real war reporter to do the business?

The idea has a certain logic and appeal to it. The campaign itself, the tactics and strategies that go with it, the generalship of the party leaders, the set-piece offensives, the big guns wheeled out to fire their broadsides and salvoes — what else is this but the language of the battlefield, often imperfectly understood, through which politics is communicated to the voters and becomes the extension of warfare by other means?

Clausewitz himself would have been intrigued. And as for me, I should welcome the clash of soundbites and the skirmishing of spin-doctors — all the excitement of combat without the danger.

But alas, it may not happen. The BBC has an excellent specialist political staff, hardly in need of reinforcement, and we war reporters are not always the most welcome of visitors wherever we go. Rather, we tend to be seen as birds of ill-omen. "I knew things were bad" is the commonest reaction when we are seen approaching, "but I didn't know they were that bad."

Besides, I have been this way before, when the political staffs were much smaller, in the general elections of the early 1970s, the pendulum years; and even then I earned a reputation as a sort of travelling jinx. A *Daily Mirror* columnist noted in April 1974: "Knowing eyebrows are being raised at the choice of Martin Bell to report Opposition Leader Edward Heath's election campaign tour. Every time Bell has traipsed along for the BBC his man has lost. In 1970, Bell followed Harold Wilson. And Ted won. Earlier this year, Bell joined Ted. And Harold won." (Of course, it turned out that Harold won again.)

The future is clouded and uncertain, much like the past. The months ahead will show clearly enough whether there is life after the war zones. If not, the alternative to the war zones will be... more war zones. One way or another, a man has to make his living.

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Alan Coren



■ Camcorders as jailbird bait, eh? It's the end of the free gift as we know it

Come with me to the margin. That is where real life happens. It always does. Remember the Bayeux Tapestry? How, in the broad flashy centre, the putatively major events of history roll awesomely on — kings, bishops, generals inexorably enmeshed in the power play of treaty and treachery, conquest and massacre, all the big stuff — while, down in the seemingly inconsequential border, all the little stuff reels out: priapic friars stalk milkmaids, fat burghers smack serfs, rag-muffins nick hens, matrons and goatboys fall into haystacks, tootsieps fall into cowpats ... Down there, without doubt, is where the real 11th century goes about its business.

And now we have newspapers. Page after headlined page of notional piff and moment from every fraught cranny of the globe, yet so little of it touching our core, until, suddenly, there is a single paragraph of *News in Brief* on, let us say, page nine of *The Times* yesterday:

Twenty-nine people wanted for failing to attend court, or who had been sentenced in their absence, were arrested after police lured them to a hotel in Liverpool by offering free camcorders. They had all received letters asking for volunteers in a market survey.

Real life, or what? Apart, of course, from the sheer relish of the scenario: the briefing session, the young DS shouting "Look, Guv, I could be well out of order here, but what if we ...", his DCI muttering that it might just work. God knows we've tried everything else, the cut to the Horatio Bottomley Suite of the Sonus Hilton, a dozen CID officers in shiny suits and cheery smiles welcoming the slavering audience of 29 camcorder-ravenous wallies to the marketing opportunity of a lifetime, the joyous denouement as, on a synchronised nod, the doors are locked, the badges flashed, the rights read out ...

But it is much more than this. It is more even than a wondrous shaft of clear cold light into the murky corners of our huckstering, double-dealing, free-offering, card-scratching, prize-grubbing, something-for-nothing world in which even crime-hardened villains may be conned out of their professional wariness by an appeal to that freebie greed which now holds each and every citizen of New Camelot in thrall.

What makes the fell swoop of the Mersey Bill even more than this is the strong possibility that their action may very well kill all the geese that lay in eggs. For how can any of us be certain ever again that the appealing con we have just been junk-mailled does not conceal a greater con calculated to get us where we have hitherto managed not to be got? Is any of us so confident of spotlessness as to take that risk?

A cold call, say, informs me that my house has been selected from thousands for the trial of an astonishing new Tonkinese fitted kitchen worth twenty grand, which will be installed for nothing in return for my allowing it to be used in future publicity, and their team will be in my area tomorrow. Shall I invite them in, only to have them whip off their dungarees and begin asking me about apparent discrepancies in my Schedule D tax return? A letter arrives, fifth of a sequence, pleading that if I do not turn up tomorrow at the spot arrowed on the enclosed map, then my absolutely free *Bomb Granada* / diamond *Rolex* / fortnight with Sharon Stone will be forfeit: if I rush round, will I discover not only that I cannot get any of these unless I agree to buy Benidorm, but also that two large men from the Serious Stationery Squad are waiting to arrest me for the theft of corporate ballpoints, typing paper, rubber bands and de luxe box files, going back to 1965?

Never mind the normal errors that too often accompany the kind of constabulary enthusiasm shown in Liverpool: it is not impossible that, should I accept the offer of a buckshot personal organiser for joining The Cricklewood Book Club, I might open the door to take delivery only to find my collar being felt by a man in a flak-jacket informing me that they have got me bang to rights for the Abbey National ram-raids, do not argue, sunshine, it is all on the computer, prints, DNA, everything.

Real life has just changed. From today, there is no such thing as a free carriage clock.



Bombers in command

Nineteen ninety-six should be declared the Year of the Bomb. In Bosnia the Americans claimed to have bombed the Serbs to the negotiating table. In Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, Hamas bombing the Israeli Government away from it. In Northern Ireland the IRA has bombed Sinn Fein into talks, then away from them, now possibly back to them again.

Bombs have become standard issue in the diplomacy of ethnic conflict. They are to constitution-building what the tough cop is to crime-busting. A bomb brings to a poised negotiation a sudden cuff round the ear and a spatter of blood. Its death and destruction are not ends in themselves. They are a means to an end. They generate such terror and outrage as to alter a negotiating balance. Political bombs are thus "smart" weapons. Clausewitz would treat them as surgical injections into the politics of peace. Those who dismiss bombers as psychopathic anarchists are fools. Bombs work because their victims let them work, by tearing up treaties and seeking revenge. Such responses do not deter the bomber; they validate his tactics. They are what he wants. They may be human but they are stupid.

Yesterday, in a letter to *The Times* written before the latest Tel Aviv bomb, Lord Jakobovits pleaded with the Israelis to show courage. They should, he wrote, "pursue the peace efforts as if there were no terrorism, and fight the terrorists as if there were no peace efforts". He cited Chaim Weizmann's plea to wartime Jews to help Britain against Hitler as if Britain had not opposed a Jewish state, yet to resist that opposition as if there were no war against Hitler.

The former Chief Rabbi's choice of antithesis is persuasive but dangerous. The terrorist is seeking to undermine the pursuit of peace by evoking just the response that Lord Jakobovits advocates: that he be fought "as if there were no peace effort". He wants the full vengeance of the Israeli state to be brought down on the head of his community, to feed its paranoia, destroy the peace party and recharge the batteries of fanaticism. The only thing he dreads is to be regarded as a common criminal, divorced from his community. His actions must not seem like a random accident, like a coach crash or a madman loose with a gun. He wants to be a "terrorist", fought as if there were

no peace. He insists that his monstrous act be anointed with the oil of politics.

Master craftsman of the political bomb is the Sinn Fein leader, Gerry Adams. Last week he continued to reap the harvest of the IRA's 25 years of explosive havoc. British ministers have long rejected Lord Jakobovits's plea that "peace efforts should be pursued as if there were no terror". They have asserted the opposite. They have said that there could be no move towards peace "until the violence stops". I have heard those words from every single Northern Ireland Secretary for the past decade, including Sir Patrick Mayhew. British ministers, rarely in Belfast for more than two years, always profess to detect that the IRA is on its last legs.

For a quarter of a century, IRA bombs have demoralised Unionists, transfixed British Governments and blighted British taxpayers. Two years ago, in a burst of desperation, John Major abandoned the "talks unless the violence ceases" policy. He did what he had said would make his stomach churn. He admitted the IRA bombers to what he called the peace process. In doing so he pulled off a coup, an IRA ceasefire which lasted longer than the two previous ones. But he failed to sideline the IRA. He kept it centre-stage by insisting on the "decommissioning" of weapons. Having dropped that condition, he insisted on early elections, which the IRA was able to enlist Dublin in opposing.

Sinn Fein will win seats in those elections and Mr Major must presumably find a form of words that admits it to the talks called for June 10. Since any words on a ceasefire from Mr Adams will be worthless, the concession to the power of the bomb will be total. Yet these laborious manoeuvres have led the British Government almost exactly to where it was in 1982. That was the date of Lord Prior's short-lived assembly and

rolling devolution. Negotiating Northern Ireland is like fighting the Kaiser in Flanders. One more push and you are back where you started.

Even for connoisseurs of Ulster folklore this past week has been grimly familiar. On Monday, everyone but Sinn Fein was invited to "proximity talks" in yet another costly Stormont conference centre, tailored to the towering egos of those involved. As always in that wretched place, every participant reverted to type. The Official Unionists boycotted, saying that because Irish ministers were present they would only talk to British ministers in London. Ian Paisley would not come because of the lavish suite for some reason granted to Dublin's Foreign Minister, Dick Spring. The SDLP jeered that the Unionists could run but they could not hide". Mr Adams tried to attend but was turned away at the gate for not having a written ticket.

Ministers paced up and down drinking coffee. Sir Patrick Mayhew broke off to see the Secretary of State's "goodwill on-all-sides" aria. This show is now in its 23rd incredible year. Each time, failure is celebrated by an IRA bomb and a Unionist backlash.

In Israel a peace settlement reached after two decades of conflict is now jeopardised by just three bombs. These have apparently the power to unhinge a process on which the happiness and prosperity of hundreds of thousands depend. In Northern Ireland, IRA bombers are no more representative of their communities than Hamas. Yet for the past decade, their possession of Semtex has granted them a veto on the progress of reform in the Province. British Governments have refused to budge without an IRA ceasefire. Even the terms of the recent ceasefire, that all-party talks would be not take place if it ended, implied that veto.

Simon Jenkins

Lofty plans

ONE OF Scotland's richest landowners is clearing out his attic. Johnny Dumfries, the 7th Marquess of Bute, has instructed Christie's to dispose of chattels worth £200,000 from his enormous home, Mount Stuart on the Isle of Bute, at an all-day sale later this month.

Islanders are taking a rum view of the disposal, which includes a well-used commode valued at up to £6,000 and a 15ft bronze urn which could go under the gavel for £15,000. "It sounds like selling the family silver to me," said one tenant.

Dumfries, a former racing driver, inherited more than £100 million and a 25,000-acre estate two-and-a-half years ago after the death of his father, and he appears determined to boost his income from the estate.

He has enraged tenants with demands for rent increases of up to 500 per cent; he has placed his father's beloved pleasure cruiser, King Duck, on the market for £150,000 after informing one of the crew that he was no longer required; and his stepmother, Lady Jennifer, is moving out after an alleged row with Dumfries.

Old man Bute was considered a

benign landlord who did not appear to have to resort to tough managerial measures to raise money. One islander fondly recalls how the late marquess discovered a Dutch Old Master which had been lying in a cupboard for years. "He found it was worth £2.4 million."

Christie's duly points out that the sale is no more than an attic



Dumfries: clearout

clearance: "Mount Stuart has a very big attic."

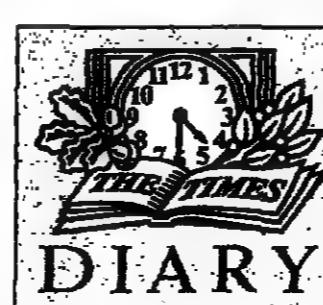
• The truth at last about the Labour luvvy John Mortimer's fantastic tale is revealed by his daughter Emily. In next month's *Harpers & Queen*, she says her father tells portkies: "He'll always tell a lie if it makes things more interesting. He fibs and never feels bad about it."

Day job

DAVID MELLOR appears to be planning for the worst and seeking alternative employment. Pre-empting a possible Labour victory in his Putney constituency at the general election, he has put himself forward to the BBC as a day-time television presenter. I understand.

Along with an eclectic group of sports personalities, including the footballer-turned-radio-presenter Garth Crooks, he is proposing a day-time sports programme. This would be his first regular TV job, but the Beeb has yet to bite on it — Mellor's cheesy grin is not to everybody's taste.

• Seoul mate JOHN MAJOR has discovered a source of succour and support. It is



not his wife Norma, nor even his fleshly biographer, Bruce Anderson. He is enjoying a love affair with Korea.

Yesterday he indulged in official talks with President Kim Young Sam for the third time in a year, arriving in Seoul to a hero's welcome from the *Korea Herald* which highlighted "the fortitude and dynamism of the Conservative host of 10 Downing Street".

He led the country in the face of diverse challenges from his critics at home and opponents abroad. The current political and economic stability of the proud nation goes to the credit of his strong leadership.

• Europe continues to divide the Tories, but it's certainly not going to trouble Nicholas Soames, the Armed Forces Minister. Pressed in the Commons yesterday about a Euro directive requiring the equal

treatment of men and women at work and its effect on the Services, he came clean: "I am sorry, but this EC nonsense is beyond me."

Top dog

AFTER THE Scott report comes the much more exciting Scottish report. Today the Westminster Dog of the Year competition, in aid of the National Canine Defence League, is to be judged. It will come down to a choice between a Tory mutt or a Labour pooch. "Although about 50 dogs have entered," says a spokeswoman, "we have not had a single entry from the Liberal Democrats. Perhaps it is a taste of things to come in the general election. David Owen says he is not entering his dog because he already knows it is the best."

Service call

AT LONDON'S fancy Ivy restaurant this week, I nearly choked on my oysters when I spotted a fellow journalist, Alexander Chancellor, wielding a mobile phone. It's simply not done at the Ivy, as I explained to Chancellor after the meat. He had the perfect excuse: "I'd been waving my arms about for ages but I couldn't attract a waiter," he said. "They were just very busy, so I rang up



"Scrub the Armada, we're suing them instead"

the restaurant from the table and asked for more coffee. They were astonished! And, doubtless, astonished.

• I am delighted to report that Hong Kong has benefited from the Foreign Secretary's largesse. Instead of trousering the £50 he won off Martin Lee, leader of the Hong Kong Democratic Party, after a wager over Britain's decision to grant visa-free access to Hong Kong citizens, Malcolm Rifkind donated it to a local charity.

P·H·S

Boys who learn to be losers
Chris Woodhead
on the white male culture of failure

The failure of boys, and in particular white working-class boys, is one of the most disturbing problems we face within the whole education system. Research shows that white working-class boys are the least likely to participate in full-time education after the age of 16, and that white boys are the most likely to be completely unqualified on leaving compulsory education.

Girls outperform boys at seven, 11 and 14 in national curriculum assessments in English, maths and science. Girls are more successful than boys in almost all major subjects and are now achieving success in traditional boys' subjects such as design and technology, computer studies, mathematics and chemistry. Physics is the only subject in which boys now outperform girls.

These findings, worrying as they are, need to be put alongside the results of school inspections showing that, in most schools serving areas of urban disadvantage, boys and girls alike continue to underperform. Standards in reading and writing remain well below national norms. In schools serving the most disadvantaged areas, less than 15 per cent of pupils achieve five or more GCSE grades A-C. The best schools in these areas achieve average GCSE point scores per pupil which are only about one third of that of schools in more advantaged areas.

There is perhaps nothing surprising in these figures. Such schools can, after all, experience huge problems. It may be very difficult to recruit and retain good teachers. Disruptive pupil behaviour may be exacerbated by inadequate parental support. The fact is that our most disadvantaged children, especially boys, remain disadvantaged at the end of their schooling. Ofsted's experience so far with failing schools, which include significant numbers of boys-only schools in disadvantaged areas (the recently closed Hackney Downs for one) confirms this.

Why? The honest answer is that nobody knows, and it becomes increasingly important that we find out. Theories, of course, abound. Is it that girls want to please their teachers more? Is it that lessons have become more unstructured than they once were, and that girls can cope with this better than boys? Is it that in some primary schools there are few, if any, men to act as role models for the boys? Nowadays even the caretaker may, it seems, be a woman. Is it that employment prospects for boys are bleaker than they are for girls and that there is no motivation, therefore, for boys to work? Or, in areas where unemployment is not as high, that white working-class boys are more confident than their peers from ethnic minorities that they will secure jobs without any qualifications? Do we, as a consequence, now have a culture among white working-class boys which is deliberately and explicitly anti-educational? Is there, as some social commentators would have us believe, a general crisis in male confidence and our teachers are simply trying to pick up the pieces of the shattered male ego?

It is widely believed that many minority communities have a greater commitment to education and value qualifications more highly. Conversely, the Education Select Committee concluded last year that there was, in white working-class communities, a lack of a general educational culture.

Solutions to the problem do not, however, depend upon any all-encompassing psycho-social theory. Anti-educational cultures grow out of the experience of educational failure. Boys who do not learn to read at primary school are boys who are likely to play truant at secondary school. It is, therefore, extremely disturbing to find that one in five of the seven-year-olds in schools involved in Ofsted's recent inspection of reading in three London boroughs achieved no score at all when tested at seven. Boys were, predictably enough, outperformed by girls in these tests. We must, whatever else we do, ensure that standards of literacy and numeracy are raised in inner-city primary schools so that all pupils, but particularly boys, are equipped with the basic skills upon which all learning depends.

It is also clear that our secondary school system has been too preoccupied with academic excellence. This is why Sir Ron Dearing's review of 16-19 education is so important. The challenge is to preserve the integrity of the academic, while developing rigorous and challenging vocational courses that can motivate pupils (in particular boys) who by the age of 14 have rejected the traditional academic diet. Much remains to be done before we can be sure that we have in place courses which will convince boys alienated by school that there is a reason to continue in education and training.

Other initiatives are worth pursuing. Better liaison with parents will, of course, pay dividends. Pupils who do not have facilities at home will benefit from homework clubs. In the future, education for parenting may do something to help with the problem of boys living in single-parent families who have no role models. But the essential challenge must be to ensure that the foundations of literacy and numeracy are laid securely in primary school, and that secondary schools have access to a range of appropriate courses for girls and, above all, boys of all abilities.

The author is Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools.



EUROPE'S REALISTS

Britain bids boldly for the ear of France

Malcolm Rifkind made an important speech on European foreign policy yesterday, made it in Paris, and astutely hinted what a relief it was to be discussing such matters with fellow-adults. Without once mentioning Germany, he remarked that "for reasons we understand", some countries were embarrassed to refer to national interests, preferring "the language of European interests".

France and Britain, he went on, were schooled instead by imperial history and their continued worldwide commitments to take foreign and defence policy seriously. They took the national interest as their starting point and they were right to do so since in a modern democracy it was an enlightened concept, "the collective expression of the democratic process". With France, Britain could discuss the world as it really is, not as "those who sleep with the Treaty of Rome under their pillow" might wish it to be.

From this starting point — one which would have been unthinkable for a British Foreign Secretary during the Mitterrand years — Mr Rifkind proceeded to take apart the Franco-German plans for developing the EU's common foreign and security policy (CFSP).

The CFSP, Mr Rifkind said tactfully, had achieved much in its first three years and he was as determined as anybody to build on this. Provided they were workable, Britain had no wish to quibble over precise institutional arrangements. But there was no getting around the core requirement: CFSP policies must be genuinely shared. He, therefore, welcomed the "implicit recognition" by France and Germany that Britain would not give way on majority voting.

The solution now advocated by the French and German Governments is "constructive abstention". A country that objected to a policy could not block it but would not have to join in implementing the decision. EU funds could still be used and the country concerned would be expected to show "diplomatic and financial solidarity". Mr Rifkind cut through this sophistry with a

lawyer's elegance. He was careful not to denounce the scheme outright; it would be fine, he said, where countries were unable to join in implementing a policy they supported, as with Germany and Unprofor. But if it became majority voting in disguise, it would be an absurdity. There was already provision under Maastricht for majority decisions on the implementation of a policy once agreed; no "clever institutional fixes" would compel countries that actually disagreed with a policy to support it. Would France have "constructively abstained" from EU policy against nuclear tests?

Britain's case for the IGC will be that in many important areas the national interests of European Union governments coincide and there is "genuine added value in joint action". Where disagreements are minor, joint action could still be feasible. But the construction of joint positions cannot be an end in itself: a sham display of unity convinces nobody, particularly not those who can sense the exercise of real power".

The difficulty with British pragmatism is that its positive proposals tend to look small and unimaginative. Mr Rifkind has understood the French need for a grand "European" gesture. He attempted to meet it by offering British support for a new foreign policy representative of the EU who could give the EU a "clearer voice".

Mr Rifkind's essential message is that Britain is prepared to work at making the CFSP "an increasingly robust complement" to national policies; but that in the real world, it is no replacement for them because "Europe does not yet have the single coherent world vision, the deep-rooted instincts of a national foreign policy". Outside the framework of an EU intergovernmental conference, this may sound like the simplest of truths. France, which has never in practice allowed EU dogma to affect its freedom of action in foreign policy, may indeed think much like Britain. But Mr Rifkind is right to try to convert tacit sympathy into working alliance. Even with President Chirac, it will not be easy.

HOME TRUTHS

Neither party's housing policies are likely to impress voters

Tony Blair's effort to represent Labour as the "party of home ownership" may seem like another audacious incursion into ideological territory which the Tories had long regarded as their own. But with the general election approaching, Tory strategists would be rash to ignore this latest theft of their clothes.

Mr Blair's main message is likely to resonate with the public: the Tories have turned themselves into "the homewreckers" party — the party of negative equity, of repossessions, broken dreams and falling house values, the party which encouraged people to buy their own homes and then turned on them once they had done so". This accusation will strike many voters as justified whatever may be said about the impracticality or irrelevance of the specific new policies proposed by Mr Blair.

To look at these proposals in detail there is indeed very little to help existing victims of negative equity and excessive mortgage borrowing, although there are some ideas to make these mishaps less likely in the future. Particularly welcome is Mr Blair's call for mortgage lending to be included under the Financial Services Act, which would require lenders to offer their customers "best advice". If such regulation had been in force in the 1980s, millions of homeowners would have been saved from unsuitable endowment mortgages which make it far more difficult to escape from negative equity. But protecting future borrowers from unsuitable endowment mortgages will do nothing to help those who were trapped in the 1980s.

To offer any substantial help to these

people would require something more controversial than regulation of the way mortgages are marketed in future. For many people with negative equity, the main hope of relief could come from cashing in endowments to pay down their mortgages. But the present structure of endowment policies makes this inordinately expensive and difficult. To force lenders and insurance companies to compensate those who had been sold inappropriate mortgages in the 1980s would take retrospective legislation or very aggressive regulatory arm-twisting.

As the general election approaches ministers will no doubt draw attention to such holes in Labour's plans. But this is unlikely to be enough to win back disillusioned voters. Millions of Britons have suffered big financial losses in the housing market. They blame the Government for tempting them into home ownership at the worst possible time and for creating the financial free-for-all which left them saddled with excessive and badly structured mortgages.

To win these people back the Government will have to do more than ridicule Labour. It will have to come up with a credible explanation of how homeowners can claw their way out of negative equity in an economy where house prices will rise only slowly, if at all. The Government must ensure that people can arrange mortgages suited to their personal circumstances in an atmosphere of financial plain-dealing. It must then maintain the environment of low interest rates and steady growth which will allow these loans to be paid off.

Three cheers for Anatole Kaletsky for demolishing them all ("Morals more than markets", February 27). Someone has to take a lead.

Kaletsky shows how slight and temporary the economic effects would be, and if the will is there the problems of definition would soon fade. "When is a slave not a slave?" would have made a good controversial feature 200 years ago.

Yours faithfully,
B. L. BABOULENE,
10 Richmond Avenue, SW20.
February 27.

From Mr Victor Serebriakov

Sir: Saferworld's letter (February 29) would be good advice if it were realistic.

The Western world which, with all its faults, is generally reliable and trustworthy, happens to have the largest, most advanced and fastest-growing arms industries. And as the Gulf War has proved, technical superiority is of enormous and growing importance in disabling an enemy with the least collateral damage. Maintaining this superiority is only possible if there is a large cash flow from selling arms — wherever possible, less advanced ones.

All attempts at agreements among first world countries to limit arms to irresponsible regimes break down in the face of competition, and often corruption. They get the arms somehow. If the West did what it would prefer to do, and set limits on the arms trade, the vital revenue would go to even less scrupulous regimes.

The way to stop evil despots from starving their people to buy arms could best be done via the financial system. Bankers have it in their power to block transfers of cash for undesirable arms deals and governments can insist that they do.

Yours etc.
VICTOR SEREBRIAKOV.

Flat 1,
6 The Paragon, SE3.

March 1.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9KN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Hostages' fate and Rushdie fatwa

From Lord Howe of Aberavon, QC

Sir, I am naturally reluctant to take issue with Jill Morrell, John McCarthy and their friends after all that they suffered. But their letter (March 2) rests upon a fundamental misunderstanding of the reference to hostages by the President of the Board of Trade, Ian Lang, on *Newswatch* on February 26.

Throughout the Iran/Iraq conflict Britain's policy was indeed one of strict neutrality. The sale of arms manufacturing equipment — to either side — was never an objective, still less a predominant one. On the contrary,

The hoped-for relaxation of the so-called "Howe guidelines" in light of the ceasefire in August 1988 would have applied equally to both countries. That posed no risk to the safety of the hostages (or other prisoners), whether it became public or not.

What did worsen their plight, however, was the Iranian fatwa pronounced against Salman Rushdie in February 1989. Particularly galling — even more for the hostages and their families than for me — was the fact that this came just one week after my second meeting with Iran's Foreign Minister, Dr Ali Akbar Velayati, reaffirming our move of a few months before to restore diplomatic relations between our two countries. That had improved our chance of pressing the hostages' case.

But the barbaric fatwa, as I told a strongly supportive House of Commons (report, February 22, 1989), left us no option but to put that relationship back into the icebox. And that required, ceasefire or no, strict control of exports to Iran. It was that (necessarily discriminatory) tightening of the guidelines which, if made public in that form, might amongst other things have increased the risk to the hostages.

The Government's response to the fatwa was carefully measured. And when, in the weeks that followed, William Waldegrave and I met the hostages' families, they continued to accept with deep and understandable anxiety the necessary wisdom of Britain's stand against doing deals to secure the release of their loved ones.

We still have nothing but admiration for the courage with which, throughout those dark years, they bore the grimly fluctuating balance between hope and despair.

Yours etc.
GEOFFREY HOWE
(Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 1983-89),
House of Lords.
March 5.

Arms trade

From Mr Bernard L. Baboule

Sir, In the fallout from the Scott report it is good to see the sheer wickedness of the arms business getting a mention (letters, February 29, March 2), and one would like to see more. All the arguments about jobs and the balance of trade must have applied in their day to slavery and the slave trade, especially the well-worn "if we don't do it someone else will".

So three cheers for Anatole Kaletsky for demolishing them all ("Morals more than markets", February 27). Someone has to take a lead.

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Fast response to oil spillages at sea

From Commander Martin Sands, RN

Sir, The *Sea Empress* disaster at Milford Haven (letters, February 23, 28, March 1) has again demonstrated the conflicts of interest which arise between the parties in a salvage situation. Once the salvor has got the casualty to accept a salvage agreement his sole aim is to save the ship and be suitably rewarded for doing so. He gets nothing if unsuccessful.

The whole incident occurred within the jurisdiction of the Milford Haven Port Authority, whose remit includes a responsibility for the safety of the environment. It must have been obvious to all concerned, as this extraordinary drama unfolded, that to bring the stricken ship, pouring out vast quantities of oil, actually into the Haven and to let it continue to do so for some days, would greatly increase the calamity for the leisure-based economy of Pembrokeshire, upon which most of the population ultimately depend.

It must have crossed their minds that the cost of this pollution to Pembrokeshire would far outweigh the value of the ship and what remained of her cargo. Despite the inevitable opposition of the salvors a sensible solution in the public interest would have been to deny her entry and insist that she be taken a long way out to sea to be pumped out as weather and other circumstances permitted, and to accept the possibility of her total loss and some pollution in the open ocean.

Presumably only the Government had the authority to demand such a course of action, but not, alas, the defendant. If ever a case merited an independent inquiry this one does.

Yours sincerely,
MARTIN SANDS,
The Longhouse, West Williamston,
Kilgetty, Pembrokeshire.
March 1.

From the Director-General of the UK Petroleum Industry Association

Sir, Professor C. M. Perrins and his co-signatories in their comments on the "tragic mismanagement" of the *Sea Empress* disaster (letter, February 28) blame the oil industry for having failed to learn the lessons of the *Braer* disaster of 1993. They appear to be unaware that the rapid-reaction team which they call for already exists and immediately swung into action when the *Sea Empress* ran aground in Milford Haven.

Following the *Braer* spill the UK industry set up a new voluntary arrangement with the Government's marine pollution control unit to provide immediate additional professional support and assistance in the event of a similar spillage, particularly where responsibility for the tank or its cargo resides outside the UK (as was the case with the *Braer*).

Your correspondents are also incorrect to focus on the recommendations of the Donaldson report on the oil industry. The report was commissioned by the Government, and decisions on its recommendations have been taken by Government. The industry has set rigorous safety standards and, in consultation with relevant groups, drawn up emergency plans and procedures, including the provision of resources and materials and these were indeed mobilised in the case of the *Sea Empress*.

Your correspondents' accusations seem far from the facts, no matter how serious the incident nor its subsequent consequences.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL FREND,
Director-General,
UK Petroleum Industry Association,
9 Kingway, WC2.

February 29.

Times traveller in the realms of gold

From Mr James Bishop

Sir, In your admirable tribute to Thomas Massa Alsager ("Owed to *The Times* money man", February 28) there is one aspect of his service to your newspaper that deserves greater emphasis. I refer to his work in speeding up the process of getting the news to the paper.

In 1834 Alsager, who among his many other responsibilities ran the communication department, introduced a system of exchanging both horses and carriages instead of only horses at the staging points, thus saving vital minutes in the process of getting reporters (who were trained to write their copy en route, whirling along, as one of them described, "at the rate of more than 13 miles an hour") back to the office.

Farther afield Alsager, working with the then manager William Delane (father of John), introduced many ingenious methods of outstripping the regular mail. These included the use of Admiralty steamers from Alexandria to Malta and Marselles and the later introduction of a faster, competitive service, the employment of special couriers in many parts of the world as well as dromedaries in the Suez isthmus and pigeon post from Paris to Boulogne, and the chartering of ships and trains. These and other systems of getting news to *The Times* first greatly contributed to its early reputation, and notably to the success of Alsager's own City office.

There were, of course, huge costs involved, and it is doubtful whether Alsager and Delane revealed their true nature to the proprietor, John Walter II. This led to what you politely refer to as their "over-creative" accounting, which involved showing a fictitious profit by the devices of carrying forward the costs of newspaper into the following year and including the reserves set aside for contingencies in the current year.

The accounts for these years were apparently destroyed, for they no longer exist in your archives, and in these circumstances it is not surprising that the proprietor called for the resignation of both men.

Yours etc.
JAMES BISHOP.

11 Willow Road, NW3.
March 4.

From Miss Jill Bickerton

Sir, Thomas Massa Alsager was my great-great-grandfather.

The family always thought that because he and William Delane, joint managers of *The Times*, were getting on in age — 1846 — Alsager was 67 — the accusation that they were "over-creative with the accounts", even if justified, was an excuse to get rid of both of them. This came at a time of the anniversary of the death of Alsager's much younger wife, mother of his 13 children, the combination of which no doubt plunged him into deep depression.

We like to think that the deputy-coroner's statement that "there was not sufficient evidence before us" (as to the state of Alsager's mind) to bring in a formal verdict of suicide, was helped by the fact that he was well liked and respected. As a result he was subsequently given a Christian burial in Kensal Green cemetery, at a time when, of course, no suicide could be given one.

Yours sincerely,
JILL BICKERTON,
2 Queensdale Walk, W1.
February 29.

Weather wisdom

From Professor B. J. Hoskins, FRS

Sir, You all enjoy a good snipe at the Met Office ("Met chief to pay for failings", report February 29, later editions). However, I do believe that, in the increasingly critical and ever more narrowly focused discussion — in reports issued first by the National Audit Office, then by the Public Accounts Committee and later by the media — sight is being lost of the crucial point: we have arguably the best national meteorological service in the world.

Personally, I can only be pleased that the Met Office spends more time on understanding and predicting the weather than it does on designing artificial targets which both satisfy the bureaucrats and can easily be attained.

Yours faithfully,
BRIAN HOSKINS
(Head of Department of Meteorology),
The University of Reading,
2 Earley Gate,
Whiteknights, Reading, Berkshire,
March 1.

Moggie and Clyde?

From Mr Manthos Kallios

Sir,



COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
March 5: His Excellency Mr Mwanyanya Ngali was received in audience by The Queen and presented the Letters of Recall of his predecessor and his own Letters of Commission as High Commissioner for the Republic of Kenya in London.

Mrs Ngali was also received by Her Majesty.

Mr J. R. Young (Deputy Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs) was present.

The Governor-General Designate of New Zealand was received in audience by The Queen when Her Majesty conferred upon him the honour of Knighthood and invested him with the Insignia of a Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of St Michael and St George.

Mrs Hardie Boye was also received by The Queen.

Field Marshal Sir Richard Vincent was received by Her Majesty upon relinquishing his appointment as Chairman of the Military Committee.

Sir Geoffrey de Ballaigue was received by The Queen as Director of the Royal Collection and Surveyor of the Queen's Works of Art and invested him with the Insignia of a Knight Grand Cross of the Royal Victorian Order.

The Duke of Edinburgh, Fellow, the Royal Society, this morning chaired a meeting of the Project Science Board of Patrons at Buckingham Palace and later attended a Luncheon at the Royal Society, Carlton House Terrace, London SW1.

His Royal Highness, Colonel, Grenadier Guards, this evening attended a Dinner at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, London SW3.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
March 5: The Princess Royal today visited Kent and was received by the Countess Mountbatten of Burma (Vice Lord-Lieutenant of Kent).

Her Royal Highness, Patron, the Butler Trust, this morning visited HM Prison Canterbury, Longport, Canterbury.

The Princess Royal, Patron, this afternoon visited the Home Farm Trust house at 147 Cheriton Road, Folkestone.

Her Royal Highness, Patron, the National Deafblind and Rubella Association, later visited Sense shops at 126 High Street, Margate, and 54 Queen Street, Ramsgate.

Latest wills

Mrs Lynne Denise Ives, of North Common, Henley, Oxfordshire — Muriel Gaisie, the comedian, actress and singer — left estate valued at £410,984 net. She left her estate mostly to her husband and two sons.

The Hon Ursula Constance Wyndham of Petworth, West Sussex, the journalist and writer, a columnist in the *Oldie* magazine where she contributed to the "Chattering Classes" feature and later became an agony aunt, left estate valued at £894,397 net.

The Princess Royal, President, REDR — Registered Engineers for Disaster Relief, this evening attended a Working Dinner at the Institution of Civil Engineers, Great George Street, London SW1.

CLARENCE HOUSE

March 5: The Lady Angela Oswald has succeeded Mrs Michael Gordon-Lennox as Lady-in-Waiting to Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother.

KENSINGTON PALACE

March 5: The Duke of Gloucester today visited Derbyshire and was received on arrival by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Derby and opened Princess Alice Court, Bridge Street, and subsequently laid the foundation stone for the Learning Centre, Kedleston Road, Derby.

In the afternoon, The Duke of Gloucester opened the refurbished buildings at the Pingle School, Swindon.

Major Nicholas Barnes was in attendance.

The Duchess of Gloucester, Patron, Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths (Cot Death Research and Support), was present this morning at the 1995 Christmas Card Competition at 14 Halkin Street, London SW1.

YORK HOUSE

ST JAMES'S PALACE
March 5: The Duke of Kent, Vice-Chairman, the British Overseas Trade Board, this morning visited T. & R. Forster, Trafalgar House, Belgrave Park, Uxbridge, East Sussex, and was met on arrival by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of East Sussex (Admiral Sir Lindsay Bryson).

His Royal Highness this afternoon visited SEOS Displays Limited, Marchants Way, Burgess Hill, West Sussex, and was met on arrival by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of West Sussex (Major-General Sir Philip Ward).

The Duchess of Kent this afternoon opened the new Children's Intensive Care Unit, Evelina Children's Hospital, Guy's Hospital, St Thomas Street, London SW1.

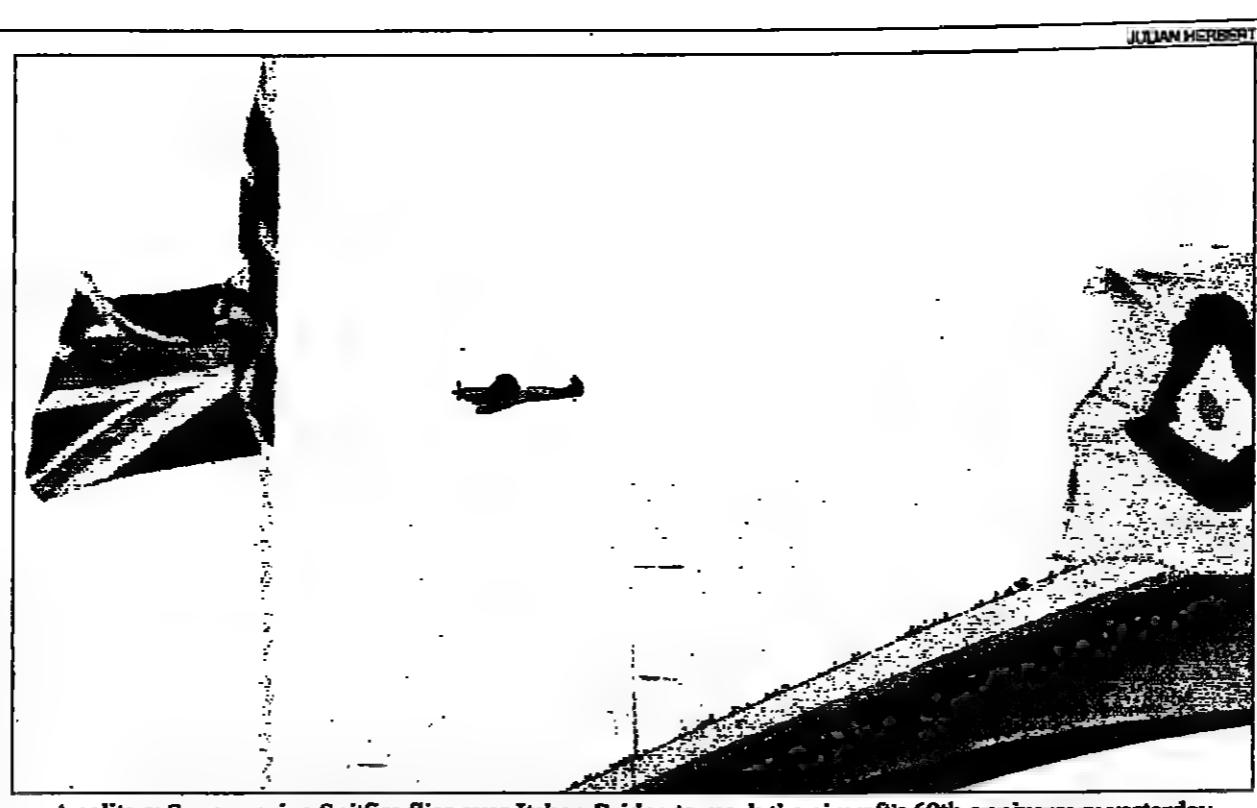
THATCHED HOUSE LODGE RICHMOND PARK

March 5: Princess Alexandra, Patron, this evening attended a Reception and Dinner to mark the Golden Jubilee of MIND (National Association for Mental Health) at St James's Palace, London SW1.

Lady Anne Elizabeth Raesh, of Middle Woodford, Salisbury, Wiltshire, the gardener, who recreated the gardens at Heale House which won the first annual Historic Houses Association Garden of the Year Award in 1984, left estate valued at £1,152,900 net.

Mr Jack Blackburn Poyston, of Winchester, Classics Major, at Winchester College 1929-65, left estate valued at £222,635 net. He left £500 to a personal legatee. £1,000 to Great Orme Street Hospital for Children, £1,000 to Winchester College 1250 to Marwell Preservation Trust, £100 to Cuckoo Mountain Reserve Team, and £100 to the Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Liverpool.

The Hon Ursula Constance Wyndham of Petworth, West Sussex, the journalist and writer, a columnist in the *Oldie* magazine where she contributed to the "Chattering Classes" feature and later became an agony aunt, left estate valued at £894,397 net.



A solitary Supermarine Spitfire flies over Itchen Bridge to mark the aircraft's 60th anniversary yesterday

Spitfire salutes diamond jubilee

By ALAN HAMILTON

IT'S VERY name is said to have struck terror into the heart of the enemy. Its superior performance helped to win the Battle of Britain. Yesterday the Supermarine Spitfire, a fighter aircraft engraved on the national memory like no other, was 60 years old.

Hundreds of spectators, many of them not even born at the aircraft's finest hour, lined the Itchen Bridge in Southampton to watch a privately-owned survivor of the thoroughbred breed fly overhead in commemoration of the maiden flight of Spitfire prototype K5054, which took to the skies from its Southampton birthplace, at what is now

the civil airport at Eastleigh for the first time on March 5, 1936.

At a service in the city to honour those who designed, built and flew the Spitfire, a plaque was unveiled in memory of those aircraft workers killed and injured during two Luftwaffe bombing raids on the Southampton factory in September 1940. Charles Jupp, a former toolroom machinist now aged 80, recalled how the raids had badly damaged the factory, but the workforce had production back to normal within three weeks.

The Spitfire, designed by R.J. Mitchell, was a state-of-the-art machine, an all-metal monocoque construction designed as the smallest possible vehicle for a pilot, his armaments and a Rolls-Royce Merlin engine. It won its spurs in the hot summer skies of 1940 by its sheer agility, pitted against the Messerschmitt Me109 in one of the crucial early battles of the war. The preserved survivor which performed a victory roll over the original factory site yesterday stirred memories in the elderly which were chiefly the memories of sound. The deep baritone growl of the Merlin piston engine was a comfort to those who heard it in wartime.

During yesterday's service the congregation held a moment's silence in memory of Jeffrey Quill, one of the Spitfire's early test pilots, who said of his first meeting with K5054: "Here, I thought to myself, is a real lady."

Birthdays today

Dr M.G. Adam, astrophysicist, 84; Sir Peter Barclay, former chairman, Social Security Advisory Committee, 70; Miss Jean Bohr, actress, 60; Mr William Davis, author, broadcaster and former chairman, British Travel Authority, 63; Mr Don Dixon, MP, 67;

Mr Sir Charles Frank, physicist, 85; Mr David Gilmour, musician and singer, 50; Sir Alastair Grant, chairman, Argyl Group, 59; Professor David Henry, Professor of Economics, Oxford University, 52; Professor Sir Raymond Hoffenberg, former President, Wolfson College, Oxford, 73; Mr Lorin Maazel, conductor, 66; Sir Hal Miller, former MP, 67; Mr Malcolm Moss, MP, 53; Mineval Nikolayeva-Terschikova, first woman in space, 59; Mr Richard Noble, world landscape record holder, 50; Dr J.H.P. Pafford, librarian, 96; Sir Ian Dixon Scott, diplomat, 87; the Right Rev David Sheppard, Bishop of Liverpool, 67; Professor Marilyn Strathern, social anthropologist, 55; Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, opera singer, 52; Mr P.C.R. Yates, chairman, Wates Group of London Properties, 58; Sir D.H. Whiitehead, publisher, 65; Mrs Ann Winterbottom, MP, 55; Sir Oliver Wright, diplomat, 75.

Royal engagements

The Duke of Edinburgh will attend the closing ceremony of the British Links with Argentina through Patagonia exhibition at the residence of the Argentine Ambassador, 49 Belgrave Square, SW1, at 11.45.

The Princess of Wales, Patron, National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery, will visit the hospital at Queen Square, WC1, at 11.15.

The Princess Royal, Patron, British Nutrition Foundation, will attend a conference entitled Nutrition for Health for Older People at the National Heart and Lung Institute, Dove House Street, SW1, at 10.30; as Patron of the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux, will open new premises for the Cheshington and Hook Bureau at Library Court, Elm Road, Cheshington, at 2.25; as President, British Knitting and Clothing Export Council, will visit Erima, 119 Green Lane, Morden, Surrey, at 4.00; and as President of the Save the Children Fund, will attend a private appeal dinner at Buckingham Palace at 7.30.

The Duke of Gloucester will attend a service of thanksgiving for the restoration of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Sheep Street, Northampton, at 11.00; and will visit Wellington School, at 12.45 to mark the school's 400th anniversary.

The Duchess of Gloucester will visit St Christopher's Fellowship at Howard House, 30 Belgrave Avenue NW3, at 3.30.

DEATHS

A Memorial Meeting for Hugh Armstrong Clegg will be held at 11.00am on Saturday, March 16, 1996, in the Hall, Nuffield College, Oxford. Those attending are asked to inform the Warden's Secretary, tel 01865 278320.

The Prince of Wales, Patron, British Nutrition Foundation, will attend a conference entitled Nutrition for

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visit St Christopher's Fellowship at Howard House, 30 Belgrave Avenue NW3, at 3.30.

DEATHS

EVANS — Edward Stevens passed peacefully in his sleep at home to St Peter's Hospice, 100 St John's Hill, London SW11, on Friday March 1st at 11.30am, followed by a memorial service at St Barnabas' Church, Putney, London SW15.

McGOWAN — Aged 80, died on Friday March 1st at 11.30am, followed by a memorial service at St Paul's U.R. Church, Harrogate, on Friday March 8th at 11.45 am followed by a service of Thanksgiving at St Peter's Church, Harrogate, at 1pm. Flowers and tributes may be sent to Mrs McGowan, 118 Ashurst Road, Tadcaster, LS24 8RL.

FERREIRA — Nicholas John, passed away after a brave struggle against illness on March 3rd aged 46 years.

FRASER — Adored wife of Peter, died suddenly on Friday March 1st at 11.30am, followed by a memorial service at St Paul's U.R. Church, Harrogate, on Friday March 8th at 11.45 am followed by a service of Thanksgiving at St Peter's Church, Harrogate, at 1pm. Flowers and tributes may be sent to Mrs Fraser, 118 Ashurst Road, Tadcaster, LS24 8RL.

GORDON DUFF — Sheila Frances, 81, died on Friday March 1st at 11.30am, followed by a memorial service at St Paul's U.R. Church, Harrogate, on Friday March 8th at 11.45 am followed by a service of Thanksgiving at St Peter's Church, Harrogate, at 1pm. Flowers and tributes may be sent to Mrs Gordon Duff, 118 Ashurst Road, Tadcaster, LS24 8RL.

HARRIS — On March 1st at 11.30am, followed by a memorial service at St Paul's U.R. Church, Harrogate, on Friday March 8th at 11.45 am followed by a service of Thanksgiving at St Peter's Church, Harrogate, at 1pm. Flowers and tributes may be sent to Mrs Harris, 118 Ashurst Road, Tadcaster, LS24 8RL.

HILL — On March 1st at 11.30am, followed by a memorial service at St Paul's U.R. Church, Harrogate, on Friday March 8th at 11.45 am followed by a service of Thanksgiving at St Peter's Church, Harrogate, at 1pm. Flowers and tributes may be sent to Mrs Hill, 118 Ashurst Road, Tadcaster, LS24 8RL.

HOBSON — On March 1st at 11.30am, followed by a memorial service at St Paul's U.R. Church, Harrogate, on Friday March 8th at 11.45 am followed by a service of Thanksgiving at St Peter's Church, Harrogate, at 1pm. Flowers and tributes may be sent to Mrs Hobson, 118 Ashurst Road, Tadcaster, LS24 8RL.

JONES — On March 1st at 11.30am, followed by a memorial service at St Paul's U.R. Church, Harrogate, on Friday March 8th at 11.45 am followed by a service of Thanksgiving at St Peter's Church, Harrogate, at 1pm. Flowers and tributes may be sent to Mrs Jones, 118 Ashurst Road, Tadcaster, LS24 8RL.

KELLY — On March 1st at 11.30am, followed by a memorial service at St Paul's U.R. Church, Harrogate, on Friday March 8th at 11.45 am followed by a service of Thanksgiving at St Peter's Church, Harrogate, at 1pm. Flowers and tributes may be sent to Mrs Kelly, 118 Ashurst Road, Tadcaster, LS24 8RL.

LEWIS — On March 1st at 11.30am, followed by a memorial service at St Paul's U.R. Church, Harrogate, on Friday March 8th at 11.45 am followed by a service of Thanksgiving at St Peter's Church, Harrogate, at 1pm. Flowers and tributes may be sent to Mrs Lewis, 118 Ashurst Road, Tadcaster, LS24 8RL.

MCNAUL — On March 1st at 11.30am, followed by a memorial service at St Paul's U.R. Church, Harrogate, on Friday March 8th at 11.45 am followed by a service of Thanksgiving at St Peter's Church, Harrogate, at 1pm. Flowers and tributes may be sent to Mrs McNaul, 118 Ashurst Road, Tadcaster, LS24 8RL.

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The latest attempt in America to hide television sex and violence from children is a doomed enterprise

The biggest folly since Prohibition



BRENDA MADDOX

Vis for lots of things. Virtuousness, vacuity and voter, to name but three — and V-chip makes four. An impending American law will require all new television sets to contain a V-chip. This clever bit of silicon should really be called the S-and-V chip because it can prevent any programme carrying a sex or violence classification from entering the set.

Of course I welcome this decision, taken by the Republican Congress and endorsed by the Democrat President. It will stop either political party from claiming a monopoly of family values in the coming presidential election. It will remind Hollywood and the television networks that they should regain their lost art of showing murder without gore, and sex with clothes on.

Sadly, the compulsory V-chip will not do what its backers want it to do. It will not make America a less violent society. It will not even justify President Clinton's ebullient claim to be "handing the TV

remote control back to America's parents".

For the V-chip is the most outwit child-control device since the out-of-reach biscuit jar. Children have only to be old enough to outsmart their parents at programming the chip, clever enough to watch in their bedroom, where the family's discarded television set inevitably ends up — the V-chip will be fitted only to new sets — or to watch forbidden shows at a friend's house.

Not much juvenile ingenuity will be required to become the neighbourhood supplier of contraband videos for those deprived by their parents of the hot stuff. The V-chip could be America's biggest folly since Prohibition.

President Clinton's concept of "America's parents" itself harks back to a bygone age. All too many

American homes have only one parent. For these, at work or out on the town much of the time the V-chip's main benefit could be to eliminate guilt about leaving the child with the electronic babysitter.

But the V-chip's function is mainly symbolic. There are already plenty of electronic aids to help responsible parents — particularly those who are cable subscribers — to block out the undesirable. The compulsory chip is the cover for a larger, more contentious campaign — to restore wholesomeness to network television.

The chip demands a national moral-rating system for programmes. Last week American broadcasters agreed to draw up their own by next January. They had no choice. For — and this alarms the American Civil Liberties Union — the new telecommuni-

cations law provides for a federal ratings agency to do the job if the industry fails to do so. And such an agency, claims the ACLU, by imposing a Government-designed code of approved content would violate the constitutional protection of free speech.

A crude classification for sex and violence will be harder to impose

on television than on film. TV is too varied a commodity: an endless, multichannelled stream of news, sports, cartoons, stories and con-

versation.

Schindler's List? Lawrence of Arabia? Tom and Jerry? The history of the American Civil War? Oprah Winfrey on battered wives?

A championship boxing match? A massacre in Israel? Personally, I'd rather let children see the evidence that blown-up bodies break into bloody bits than the contorted faces of shrieking mothers and weeping wives. But in Britain, by agreement, the violence is cer-

sified out of the news.

The impossibility of designing a code that will satisfy all of America's warring moralists probably will sabotage the V-chip. Simply to classify all television material by next year would mean either that

one country welcomes the head of state's mistress to the graveside while its neighbour considers that the mere fact of having a mistress may disqualify a man from holding the top job at all.

Big names in the BBC seem to be falling over each other to join the new Channel 5, which will take to the air — well, to some of it — next January. Money people, too, are excited about the riches about to be wrung from Britain's last available terrestrial channel.

Hard, I had thought, for a new service to find a niche not occupied by the existing four. But last Tuesday at 8pm I changed my mind. On offer was: children's plastic surgery (BBC1), the British funeral (BBC2), interviews with families of road-accident victims (Channel 4) and an hour-long drama about a compulsive liar confessing to murder (ITV).

Yes. Channel 5 will be very welcome.

Bimedia is the only way forward

Chris Cramer says the BBC's news policy makes sense

I believe I heard a very old canard sound off in Brenda Maddox's column last week when she suggested that the BBC's policy of using its reporters and correspondents across radio and television news programmes was, in some way, damaging the purity of radio reporting.

The BBC — like many other broadcasters — has been using its staff both for radio and for television for the past 40 years. It is a sensible use of people paid for out of licence-payers' money and tell by the wayside in the 1970s only because of the dynamics of an emerging television industry and the mistaken belief that both media needed their own dedicated reporting resources.

Common sense was reintroduced with the arrival of the BBC's current Director-General, John Birt, who instantly ditched this grotesque waste of staff and money.

Since 1991, the BBC's News-gathering department has been operating the so-called "bimedia" policy, with great success and to the admiration of fellow broadcasters around the world.

Far from damaging radio output, it has positively enhanced the kind of reportage viewers and listeners now take for granted on Radio 4's *Today* programme and BBC1's Nine O'Clock News.



The BBC now has reporters, such as George Alagiah, who can work on both TV and radio

common theme. A good radio correspondent is almost always a good television correspondent. And vice versa.

Through training and professional production back-up the BBC has turned superb television practitioners. Fergal Keane first in South Africa, now in Hong Kong, now has as many television awards to his credit as those he won for radio. Nicholas Witchell and John Humphrys and George Alagiah, formerly television reporters, now mostly work for radio outlets.

Both forms of broadcasting often require a different set of skills. But good journalism is a identical way. They are professional journalists whose task is to get the facts and that actually to go with it.

Radio has never taken second place in the BBC's bimedia policy. Far from it. It has benefited from the expansion in foreign and domestic coverage which has accompanied the policy of covering the world in a better way. And when it comes to breaking news: radio comes first.

The BBC's spread of overseas bureaux — the largest for any world broadcaster — has put a broadcaster in just about every part of the globe.

Radio may address a different audience and work to sharper deadlines but the newsgatherers work in almost

afforded to launch the continuing news service on radio, Radio 5 Live, and will not be able to launch a television version for the UK.

And the bimedia policy will not end there. When radio and television colleagues are housed in the same building in west London, the synergy which has developed since 1991 will enhance further. And when it comes to breaking news: radio comes first.

The BBC's spread of overseas bureaux — the largest for any world broadcaster — has put a broadcaster in just about

every part of the globe.

Without a bimedia policy, the BBC could never have

• Chris Cramer is Head of News-gathering for the BBC.

Alan Mitchell reports on food marketers who dance around labelling regulations

How healthy is food containing factor X?

fit offered by the functional ingredient? As far as cost, some "energy drinks" sell at 40 times a litre more than own-label colas.

The biggest issue, however, is substantiation. Regulations about food health claims are strict. Any company wanting to claim that one of its products prevents, treats or cures human disease has to apply for a medical licence.

Jack Winkler, chairman of the National Food Alliance's functional foods working group, says agile marketers are dancing around the regulations. Instead of claiming that a product prevents, say, heart disease, they say it "maintains" or "promotes" a healthy heart or they imply a claim by the name or design of the product. MD Foods' *Pact*, for example, comes in a heart-shaped tub. A new range from Functional Nutrition is simply called Heartwatch.

Mr Winkler says the most subtle evasion device is to use the company's PR machine to get the media gushing about the latest "miracle" ingredient. Then all the advertising has to do is say "with added X".

Manufacturers criticise the "scare tactics" used by some food campaigners. David Richardson, Nestlé group chief scientist and chairman of the Food and Drink Feder-

ation's functional foods working party, insists that pressure groups and manufacturers are fundamentally at one. "Consumers," he says, "do not want misleading and unhelpful claims, and all reputable manufacturers agree." But at present, he notes, "there are no precise guidelines on the nature of scientific validation".

Already there are casualties. Last December SmithKline Beecham was rebuked by the Advertising Standards Authority for its claims about Ribena Juice and Fibre. Today the ASA announces it has upheld three complaints against Gaio, an MD Foods yoghurt-style product which, its marketers claimed, could "help to lower the level of harmful cholesterol in the body".

Speaking at the time of Gaio's launch, David Whitehouse, MD Foods' marketing director, said: "We have invested in independent clinical research to demonstrate the real benefits of Gaio." But the ASA rules that the limited size of this independent research (a six-week study of 54 men in Denmark) means the claims are "unsubstantiated".

Now the Government's Food Advisory Committee says it will review guidelines for labelling genetically modified foods and re-examine existing controls on health claims for functional foods.

THE TIMES SOCIAL GROUPS TOP-TEN TV SHOWS: ABC1/C2DE

FEBRUARY 12 to 18, 1996

Socio-economic groups ABC1

Programme	Date	Time	Channel	Producer	Audience (in ABC1)	Code
1 Casualty	Sat 17	20.07	BBC1	BBC	7.2	8.7
2 Coronation Street	Wed 14	19.30	ITV	Granada	8.9	11.7
3 EastEnders	Thu 15	19.30	BBC1	BBC	8.8	10.0
4 Ballykissangel	Sun 18	19.45	BBC1	World/Ballykissangel	6.5	7.7
5 Antiques Roadshow	Sun 18	19.51	BBC1	BBC	6.2	7.4
6 The National Lottery Live	Sat 17	19.51	BBC1	BBC	5.9	8.0
7 The New Adventures Of Superman	Sat 17	18.16	BBC1	Warner/DC 3rd	5.5	5.7
8 As Time Goes By	Sun 18	20.26	BBC1	Theatre of Comedy/DLT	5.3	6.2
9 The Bill	Fri 16	20.02	ITV	Thames	5.3	5.9
10 Catherine Cookson's The Girl	Fri 16	21.02	ITV	Festival/Worldwide	3.2	7.7

Socio-economic groups C2DE

1 Coronation Street	Wed 14	18.30	ITV	Granada	6.9	11.7
2 EastEnders	Thu 15	20.07	BBC1	BBC	7.2	9.7
3 Casualty	Sat 17	20.07	ITV	Granada	4.8	5.0
4 Emmerdale	Thu 13	20.00	ITV	Granada	5.2	5.3
5 The Bill	Fri 16	20.02	ITV	Thames	5.3	5.9
6 The National Lottery Live	Sat 17	19.51	BBC1	BBC	5.5	8.0
7 Play Your Cards Right	Fri 16	18.59	ITV	Talbot Fremantle	5.5	7.8
8 Catherine Cookson's The Girl	Fri 16	21.02	ITV	Festival/Worldwide	5.2	7.7
9 Ballykissangel	Sun 18	19.45	BBC1	World/Ballykissangel	6.5	7.7
10 Antiques Roadshow	Sun 18	19.01	BBC1	BBC	6.0	7.8

BABs (Broadcasters' Audience Research Board)/David Graham & Associates 01822 322229. Copyright/no unauthorized reproduction. Repeats/second transmissions not aggregated. Highest editions per week only.

M

r Luff, who says he is "genuinely very encouraged" with the outcome of the meeting, believes such an editorial policy is an excuse to bombard young people with salacity. "Piccs on how pop stars lose their virginity undermine the magazines' claims that they are offering useful advice," he says.

This makes Ms Matthews seethe. "Much of our editorial content is taken out of context," she says. "If these people have lost their virginity at an early age then we say it's a bad thing. What annoys me about Mr Luff is that he stands up in Parliament and reads headlines from *More*, which has a readership with an average age of 22." Mr Luff counters this. "It's simply not clear

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NEWS

Boys who are 'doomed to failure'

■ White working-class boys are getting caught in a vicious circle of under-achievement at school that could lead through truancy to a life of unemployment or crime and eventually cause social upheaval, education experts said.

Many boys are leaving school without basic skills, and their failure is described by the Chief Inspector of Schools as one of the education system's most disturbing problems.....Page 1

FA raided over 80p levy on footballs

■ European Commission officials unexpectedly raided the Football Association headquarters in London in an investigation into a levy on footballs. According to the commission, the collection of a levy of 80p by FIFA, football's governing body, for each football it approves may be a breach of European competition law.....Page 1

Law Society rule

The Law Society's governing body will be asked to approve measures to prevent any sequel to last year's furor over sexual harassment allegations.....Page 1

Envoy criticised

Jean Kennedy Smith, the American Ambassador to Dublin, has been criticised by State Department investigators for punishing dissident over her past support for Gerry Adams.....Page 1

New fish dispute

Ministers promised to win control of Britain's fishing grounds after suffering a legal defeat that allows Spanish fishermen to sue the Government for banning them from British waters.....Page 2

Child sex film

A film whose depiction of ten-year-olds indulging in sex and drugs was considered so offensive it was refused a general certificate in America has been approved by British censors.....Page 3

Medical reprimand

Medical authorities who took a dying ten-year-old boy to four hospitals during a 12-hour ordeal were condemned for "ghastly misjudgment".....Page 5

Missionary windfall

A little-known missionary organisation has leapt into the top 30 of the charity league with a windfall of £92 million from the sale of land in Hong Kong.....Page 8

Military pictures are posted AWOL

■ The Ministry of Defence has "lost" almost 200 works of art, one fifth of its entire collection. The paintings, prints and drawings have gone absent without leave from residences, messes and even the offices of defence ministers. The value of the missing art is not known, but the ministry's collection of about 900 items is worth in excess of £5 million.....Page 7



John Major burning incense at the national cemetery in Seoul yesterday during his one-day official visit to South Korea

BUSINESS

Tarmac: Police have raided the offices of the construction group and its subcontractors in an investigation into alleged financial irregularities.....Page 25

Rail hotel: The Great Eastern is to undergo a £30 million facelift after its lease by Railtrack to a consortium including restauranteur Sir Terence Conran.....Page 25

Tesco: The supermarket group made its boldest move yet into Eastern Europe with the purchase of businesses in the Czech Republic and Slovakia for £77 million. Tesco already has a presence in Hungary and Poland.....Page 25

Marconi: The FTSE 100 rose 8.5 to 3777.1. Sterling to 83.6 after rises from \$1.5278 to \$1.5281 and DM2.2556 to DM2.2593.....Page 28

SPORT

Cricket: Richie Richardson, the West Indies captain, announced that he would retire from the international game after the World Cup. He said he had made the decision last summer.....Page 48

Football: Manchester United's victory over Newcastle United opened up the Premiership to a three-team finale that is likely to become as tense and intriguing as any in recent times.....Page 44

Racing: Robin Cook, the shadow Foreign Secretary, attracted support at the Tote lunch with plans for bets to combat the National Lottery.....Page 45

An Oscar for art? For the first time recently a subtitled "art-house" film is up for the Best Film Oscar. Does *Il Postino* have any chance against *Apollo 13*?.....Page 33

Hot from Cornwall: The Dooneur Warehouse has launched its festival of regional theatre with a fine play from Cornwall, *The King of Prussia*.....Page 33

Period perfection: One of the world's finest period-instrument ensembles, Vienna Concentus Musicus, demonstrated its quality in an all-Haydn programme at the Barbican.....Page 35

Well nights: Dessau, in east Germany, has paid tribute to its most famous musical son by inaugurating an annual Kurt Weill Festival.....Page 35

To pay or not: Nigella Lawson looks at the clash between believing in state education and wanting the best for your children.....Page 17

War and peace: Martin Bell says he is going to retire from war reporting. But what then will a war correspondent do?.....Page 17

FASHION

Long-legged cipher: The model, with her unnaturally womanly movements, challenges men to think the unthinkable.....Page 18

MEDIA

Duel skills: Biomedic reporting is the only way forward says the BBC. Using one journalist to report for radio and television saves licence-payers' money.....Page 23

ARTS

Selling Scotland: As aristocrats find the upkeep of their land too costly, many estates are being sold to overseas buyers.....Page 41

SCIENCE

Hamas represents those Palestinians who still believe Israel's existence is an intolerable affront and who embrace the notion that only through violence can Palestinian aspirations be achieved. Arafat must act in behalf of those Palestinians who have had enough of killing and whose greatest longing is for normal, peaceful and productive lives.....Los Angeles Times

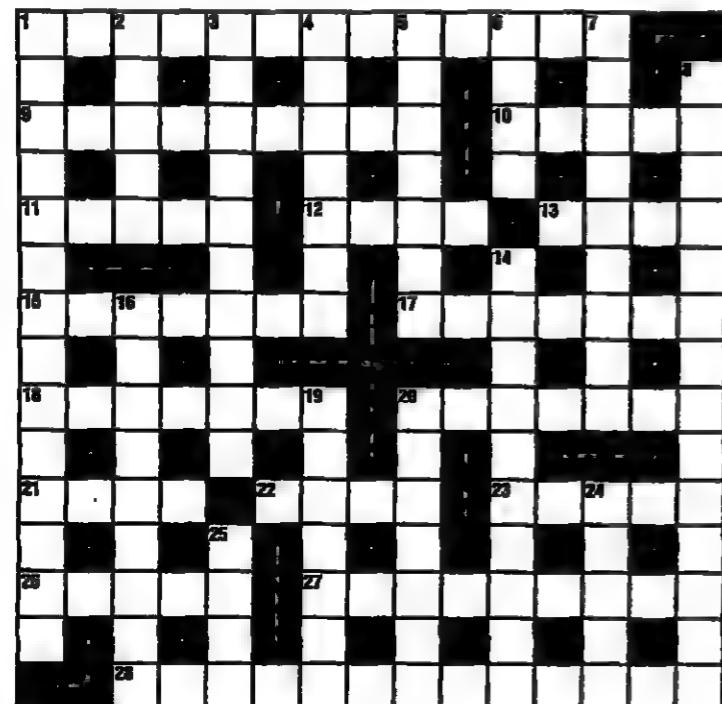
LITERATURE

Anna Larina, widow of the Bolshevik theorist Nikolai Bukharin; Vehbi Koç, Turkish businessman; Peter Samuelson, painter and diarist.....Page 21

LIFESTYLE

Lord Howe on Rushdie fatwa; Sea Empress disaster: *The Times* 150 years ago.....Page 19

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,108



ACROSS

- Two sizes of paper used in plant (5,8).
- Came through and serve beers (4,5).
- Leave to study outside of Grenoble (5).
- One served with French court order (5).
- Language is pronounced indicator of educational background (4).
- Weapon originally featured in Casebook of Sherlock Holmes (4).
- The French repeatedly beset former British colony, it's clear? (7).
- Back roads round roadway showing potential for development (7).
- Description of setting of Blarney stone (7).
- Seven in Thebes I destroyed as well (7).
- Society Islands in Pacific whence final article's dispatched (4).
- Russian woman almost perspiring when she runs back (4).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,107

COOMB GROUNDOUN
H P O O C A E N
ENTOURAGE TAWSE
B I T D A T H A
RECOIL KNEEJER
Y S G B V
PINGUCTION TUFF
I A B A I A C C
ENVY STONYBROKE
T I L I S D
BIGWHEEL QUARTZ
A A R I B E N O
NOBLE BLINDFOLD
J L A D B E S R
OVERTAXED DOTIV

- To publish quota they're taking regular contributions (5).
- Money one might charge hunters in Africa (5).
- Small excavation is absorbing one at ancient city (9).
- Flourishing and healthy are this? (4,3,6).

DOWN

- London landlords usually starting a list of names (7,7).
- Worker's not beginning well (5).
- Long transporter ran over eight in the US (6,4).
- Release follows under a second policeman (7).
- Newsday broadcast presenting narrow views? (7).
- Desire a charming woman, but not the wife (4).
- Sleepy place where fraticide retired (4,2,3).
- Island passes encourage railway operating through narrow cuttings (7,7).
- Cause metal buckling and take away strength (10).
- Lime which is lacking hard pips originated here (9).
- Girl left a novel problem (7).
- Hit on head and bottom - what's right in that? (7).
- Regret replacing inside of timer to make more accurate (5).
- Book an American soldier, beginning to look (4).

This puzzle was solved within 30 minutes by 28 per cent of the solo competitors in the Manchester Regional Final of *The Times* Aberfan Crossword Championship and by 21 per cent of the pairs.

Restrictions apply.

AA ROADWATCH

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West Mids & SW Glos & Gwent: 710
Shropshire, Cheshire & W. Wales: 711
Central Midlands: 712
East Midlands: 713
Lincolnshire & Humberside: 714
Gwynedd & Ceredigion: 715
NW England: 717
W. & S. Yorks & Derby: 718
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ARTS 33-35

The Postman knocks at uncle Oscar's door.



HOMES 41

Who are the real owners of Scotland?



SPORT 42-48

Tired Richardson retires hurt from international cricket

NEW TECH v THE HUMAN TOUCH
Secretarial 38

THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

WEDNESDAY MARCH 6 1996

MMC expected to clear power generators' bids

By MELVYN MARCUS
CITY EDITOR

SPECULATION is mounting in the electricity sector that the Monopolies and Mergers Commission is ready to give a qualified go-ahead for PowerGen and National Power's respective takeover bids for Midlands Electricity and Southern Electric.

Inquiries by *The Times* indicate that the MMC panel, investigating the proposed amalgams, finished taking evidence from interested parties two weeks ago. The MMC, whose chairman Graeme Odgers also chairs the investigating panel, is due to report its findings to Ian Lang,

President of the Board of Trade, on March 22. Mr Lang's statement on the MMC's inquiry, accompanied by publication of the report, is expected to follow within two or three weeks. A go-ahead for the PowerGen/Midlands and National Power/Southern takeovers would run counter to the arguments put forward to the Office of Fair Trading and the MMC by Stephen Littlechild, Director-General of Offer. Professor Littlechild was opposed to much of the takeover activity that engulfed the electricity sector last year and is strongly set against vertical integration between power generation companies and the regional electricity

companies (Rels) responsible for distribution.

The £1.9 billion bid by PowerGen, the chief executive of which is Ed Wallis, for Midlands, and National Power's £2.8 billion bid for Southern were referred to the MMC last November. Mr Lang stated that "the decisions to make a reference do not in any way prejudge the question of whether or not either merger might operate against the public interest". He added: "In general, I do not believe that vertical integration is inherently objectionable whether in the electricity industry or elsewhere. However, in these two cases, the structural change proposed could

have an effect on the development of competition."

The MMC's five-strong panel, chaired by Mr Odgers, is understood to have taken evidence from numerous parties. The four companies involved in the reference have inevitably given evidence, along with Professor Littlechild, but soundings are also understood to have been taken from the National Grid, the Major Energy Users Council, and several Rels including Eastern, acquired for £2.5 billion by Hanson.

ScottishPower's £1.1 billion takeover of Manweb brought about an amalgam of generation and distribution interests, but, unlike the Power-

Gen/National Power deals, was not referred. The authorities argued that ScottishPower's share of the generation market in England and Wales was relatively small.

Further consolidation within the sector is seen as inevitable — speculation has recently swirled around Yorkshire Electricity — but several potential US predators are reputed to be waiting on publication of the MMC report. Midlands share price shaded 2p to 408p on the stock market yesterday, close to its peak of 412p. Southern's shares added 4p to 889p, against a high of 899p.

Pennington, page 27



Tarmac raided by fraud squad

By JON ASHWORTH AND MICHAEL EVANS

TWO of Britain's biggest construction groups have been raided by detectives studying alleged financial irregularities involving the Coulport nuclear armaments depot on the Clyde.

Thirty officers from the Ministry of Defence (MoD) police fraud squad swooped on the offices of Tarmac and Matthew Hall last week and seized documents relating to contracts worth millions of pounds. They are thought to be investigating allegations that invoices for construction work may have been falsely inflated.

Matthew Hall is a wholly owned subsidiary of Amec, the UK construction and engineering group that last year fought off a hostile £360 million bid by Kvaerner, the Norwegian shipbuilder and engineer.

Tarmac is chaired by Sir John Banham, former director-general of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), while its chief executive is Neville Simms. The company had the contract to build roads and service facilities at Coulport, which came under the Trident nuclear submarine development project.

Last year, the MoD was accused of "mismanagement on a grand scale" by the cross-party Public Accounts Committee, after construction costs on the project over-ran by £100 million.

The raids were carried out on Thursday. Tarmac issued a statement, saying it was "extremely surprised" by the MoD action, which related to outstanding claims on Coulport contracts. Confirming the raid on the offices of Tarmac Construction in Wolverhampton,

Simms, Tarmac chief

ton, the company said: "It is most unusual to find this sort of action being taken by a client with whom negotiations are progressing. We will cooperate fully if there is any investigation once we have been advised of the MoD's concerns."

The contract, which was originally estimated at £88 million, rose to well over £100 million after significant changes to the proposals by the MoD. The construction programme roughly doubled the size of the Coulport base, where Polaris and Trident missiles are assembled and stored, and which is about three miles west of the Faslane nuclear submarine base.

It is believed that the MoD has already agreed payments to Tarmac of around £108 million. But during negotiations to resolve the remaining claims, the MoD called in its police force to seize documentation.

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It is believed that the MoD has already agreed payments to Tarmac of around £108 million. But during negotiations to resolve the remaining claims, the MoD called in its police force to seize documentation.

Simultaneous raids were carried out on Matthew Hall's offices in London and Glasgow. The action was coordinated by Detective Superintendent John Hume, head of the MoD police fraud squad, under the supervision of the Procurator Fiscal at Dumbar-

ton, the company said: "It is most unusual to find this sort of action being taken by a client with whom negotiations are progressing. We will cooperate fully if there is any investigation once we have been advised of the MoD's concerns."

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Simultaneous raids

Diamonds sparkling says De Beers

By COLIN CAMPBELL

THE British diamond producer De Beers is more than pleased to note are resuming their love affair with diamonds.

Last year, retail gem diamond sales in the UK rose by 7 per cent. In France, gem sales were 11 per cent higher, in Korea sales were 10 per cent up, and America's retail gem market recorded a 7 per cent advance. It was only Canada, Taiwan and Mexico where markets were seriously lower.

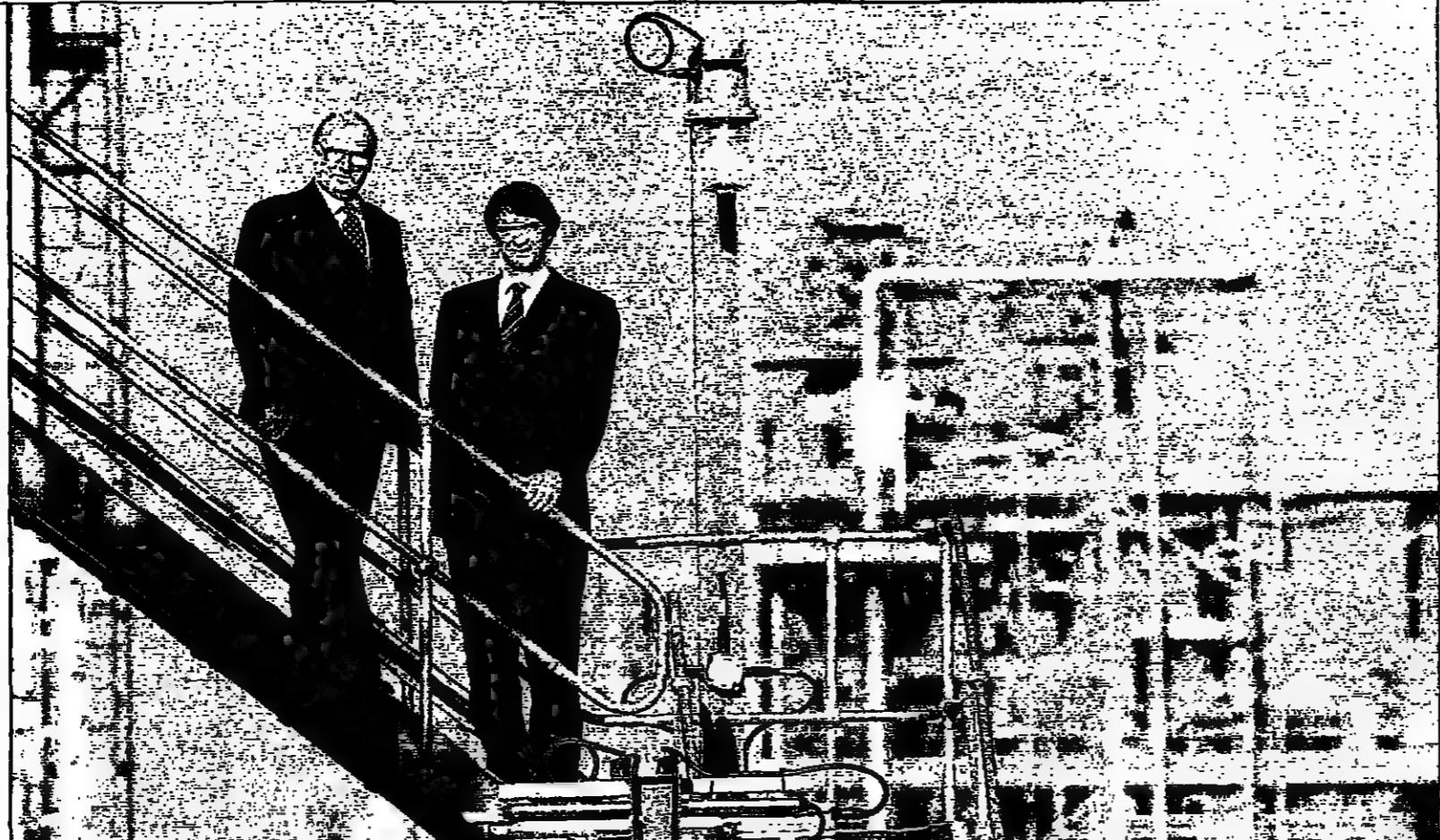
Julian Ogilvie Thompson, chairman of De Beers, admitting that 1995 had been a difficult trading market, was thus in a confident mood yesterday when announcing December 31 year end results.

De Beers' attributable earnings were 11.4 per cent higher at \$624 million, and equity accounted earnings rose by 18.4 per cent to \$986 million.

In recognition of stronger profits, De Beers' total dividend for 1995 is rising from 84.4 cents to 92.9 cents a share, covered 1.77 times.

To date, 1996 has been "so far, so good". After 18 months of difficult and tough negotiations, De Beers and Russia recently signed a new memorandum which, the Russian government hopes, will lead to a three year marketing contract being formalised before the end of March.

Nicky Oppenheimer, De Beers' deputy chairman, admitted a contingency plan had been drawn up in the event that the Russians had broken away, but he was "very happy and very pleased" that final agreement had been reached.



John Hollowood, left, and Jim Ratcliffe, managing director, take a step in the right direction at their Southampton chemical works

TOURIST RATES

	Bans	Bands
Australia \$	2.11	1.95
Austria Sch	18.90	15.40
Belgium Fr	14.14	14.14
Canada \$	2.19	2.03
Cyprus Cyp	0.731	0.696
Denmark Kr	8.19	8.54
Finland Fim	7.98	8.07
France Fr	8.18	7.50
Germany Dm	580.00	385.00
Greece Dr	12.45	11.45
Hong Kong \$	12.45	11.45
Iceland Kr	5.1400	4.4000
Italy Lira	2479.00	2584.00
Japan Yen	174.50	182.00
Korea Wons	1.02	0.97
Netherlands Gld	2.88	2.84
New Zealand \$	2.41	2.19
Norway Kr	10.42	9.92
Portugal Esc	24.40	22.70
R Africa Rd	1.44	5.04
Spain Pts	108.00	105.00
Sweden Kr	11.25	11.25
Switzerland Fr	1.97	1.78
Turkey Lira	1.97	1.97
USA \$	1.625	1.485

Rates for small denominations bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Current rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

Eggar turns up the heat on electricity industry

By PHILIP BASSETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

1

THE Government will today warn Britain's electricity industry that it should avoid the mistakes of the UK's gas industry in preparing for competition and start to prepare itself now for the opening up of the domestic power market.

Electricity industry leaders will be told to "put up or shut up" on the introduction of competition in the industry and to ensure now that they have the necessary capability to take advantage of the open-

ing of the electricity market in two years' time.

In a hard-hitting speech at a conference in London, Tim Eggar, Minister for Energy and Industry, will urge the industry to be ready for the start of full competition.

Some industry leaders will view his statement as a coded warning Professor Stephen Littlechild, the industry's regulator, to ensure that the probably more difficult process of electricity competition

runs more smoothly than the introduction of even pilot competition in the domestic gas market.

Against a background of some consumer complaint, the pilot for open domestic gas markets is finally due to start on April 29 in the test area of the South West.

Gas analysts judge the Government and the industry both to be responsible for the difficulties in introducing competition in gas. In a state-

ment likely to prompt some scepticism, Mr Eggar is ex-

pected to tell electricity leaders that the introduction of gas competition has been a "bit rocky" than the Government thought it would be.

He will make clear the Government's hopes that the electricity industry will reflect on the lessons learned from gas, and he will urge the industry to "get its act together" well in advance of the electricity start date.

Mr Eggar is expected to tell today's conference: "Now is the time - just do it." He will say that the industry has a responsibility to develop the systems, provide the resources and ensure it has available the experience necessary for competition.

Industry leaders are likely to be told that they no longer have the "luxury" of debating "trivial" points about competition, nor the ability to complain subsequently about its organisation because they were not paying attention now.

He is expected to say: "Now is the time to make a big jump between planning and delivery - put up or shut up."

Mr Eggar will emphasise the Government's firm commitment to opening up the electricity market because of the increased efficiency and benefits to consumers and the industry that competition will bring.

VSEL returns to merchant fold with £15m contract

By ROSS TIEMAN, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

1

VSEL, the Barrow-in-Furness warship builder, has won its first merchant ship contract for almost 25 years. The yard, owned by the General Electric Company (GEC), has been chosen to build two 4,500-tonne petrol and aviation fuel tankers by James Fisher and Sons, the quoted Barrow ship operator, under a £14.7 million contract.

Brian George, chief executive of GEC Marine, asked to quote for the order after learning of Fisher's plans to replace two of its five small

tankers. David Cobb, chairman of Fisher, said that VSEL had beaten off bids from rival yards in Europe and the United States which were comparable on price. Cheaper offers from Far East yards were offset by the added costs of supervision and bringing the ships to European waters.

The achievement is all the more remarkable because VSEL is listed by the European Commission as a warship yard, and barred from seeking government subsidies.

The company has not built a

merchant ship since it completed the cruise liner *Odessa* in 1974. But the tankers will be relatively complex ships to build, embodying double-hulls to meet the latest Lloyd's Register requirements.

Fisher, which operates 13 ships of its own and manages six nuclear fuel and waste transporters owned by BNFL, the state reprocessing group, is quoted on a matched-bargain basis. In 1994, it recovered from a £5.63 million loss to make a pre-tax profit of £2.28 million.

Inspic finds winning formula

Inspec finds winning formula

By MARTIN BAILEY

INSPEC GROUP enjoyed a sharp rise in profits for 1995 and said that demand for its speciality chemicals remained strong in the current year.

The company, formed through the management buyout of the speciality chemicals interests of BP and floated on the stock market in 1994, is to buy the polyimide fibres business of Lenzing AG in Austria for £5.7 million.

Inspic profits rose to £31.1 million before tax, from £13.3 million last year. This reflected the £78.2-million purchase of BP Antwerp, now renamed Inspec Belgium, which was financed through rights issue.

The latest acquisition comprises Lenzing's PB4 high performance polyimide fibres business, whose products have high temperature applications, such as fire-fighting apparel. Last year, the business earned operating profits of £300,000.

Inspic is paying a final dividend of 4p a share, which lifts the total dividend 50 per cent to 6p, from earnings of 20.68p (2.11p). The shares rose 10p to 380p, compared with the flotation price of 160p in March 1994.

John Hollowood, chairman, said: "With current demand remaining firm, we are well placed to build on the considerable success which the group has achieved."

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

CBI backs Clarke on single currency

BUSINESS leaders gave warning yesterday that longer-term interest rates could be higher if Britain remained outside a single European currency. The acknowledgement by the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) - which will call for a national debate on Europe - is in line with similar views from Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor.

Alair Turner, Director-General of the CBI, told a House of Lords committee that the UK did not have to decide whether to take part in economic and monetary union until the middle of next year. But in a carefully balanced view of the benefits and disadvantages of EMU, he said that if the UK decided not to join, financial markets might demand an interest rate premium as insurance against the risk of currency devaluation and higher inflation. He said: "I think it's a fact that if we stay outside of the single currency it's highly likely that we would have somewhat higher long-term interest rates for quite a period of time."

Trafalgar value rise

SBC WARBURG, the merchant bank that advised Kvaerner, the Norwegian engineering group on its successful £190 million takeover of Trafalgar House, was valuing Trafalgar at less than half that price just weeks before the bid. An analyst research note distributed in early February valued Trafalgar at 21p a share in contrast to the 50p a share that Kvaerner actually paid. Warburg emphasised that the valuation was based on a forced sale or break-up situation and significantly underestimated the value of the engineering and construction businesses to a rival company like Kvaerner.

European IT recovers

EUROPE'S information and communication technology industry is making a strong recovery from a three-year slump and, for the first time, will grow faster than its rivals in the US and Japan, a study indicated yesterday. The annual report by the European Information Technology Observatory group showed a 1995 increase in the computer and telecommunications market in Europe of 8.1 per cent to reach \$389 billion. Annual growth in the 1995-97 period is expected to top 8.7 per cent in Europe, compared with 6.5 per cent in the US and 6.1 per cent in Japan, the study indicated.

Business failures rise

BUSINESS failures grew 11 per cent to 181 in February, against 161 in January, Deloitte & Touche, the accountant and management consultant, reported yesterday. However, Ralph Preese, partner in charge of corporate recovery, said the figures were relatively stable compared with last year and reinforced a decreasing trend. In February last year, 176 firms went into receivership or had an administrator appointed. The largest increase in business failures was seen in the transport and communications sector, followed by hotel & catering, retailing and construction.

Universities beat Serco

SERCO GROUP has lost out to a consortium of universities in a bid to take over the Natural Resources Institute, Sir Nicholas Bonser, Foreign Office Minister, announced yesterday. The Government instead chose a grouping of Edinburgh and Greenwich Universities, Imperial College of Science and Technology and Wye College of London University as the preferred bidder. Serco's bid was in association with the University of Wales. The institute works primarily for Britain's foreign aid programme, helping developing countries to exploit their natural resources more efficiently.

Six Britons arrested

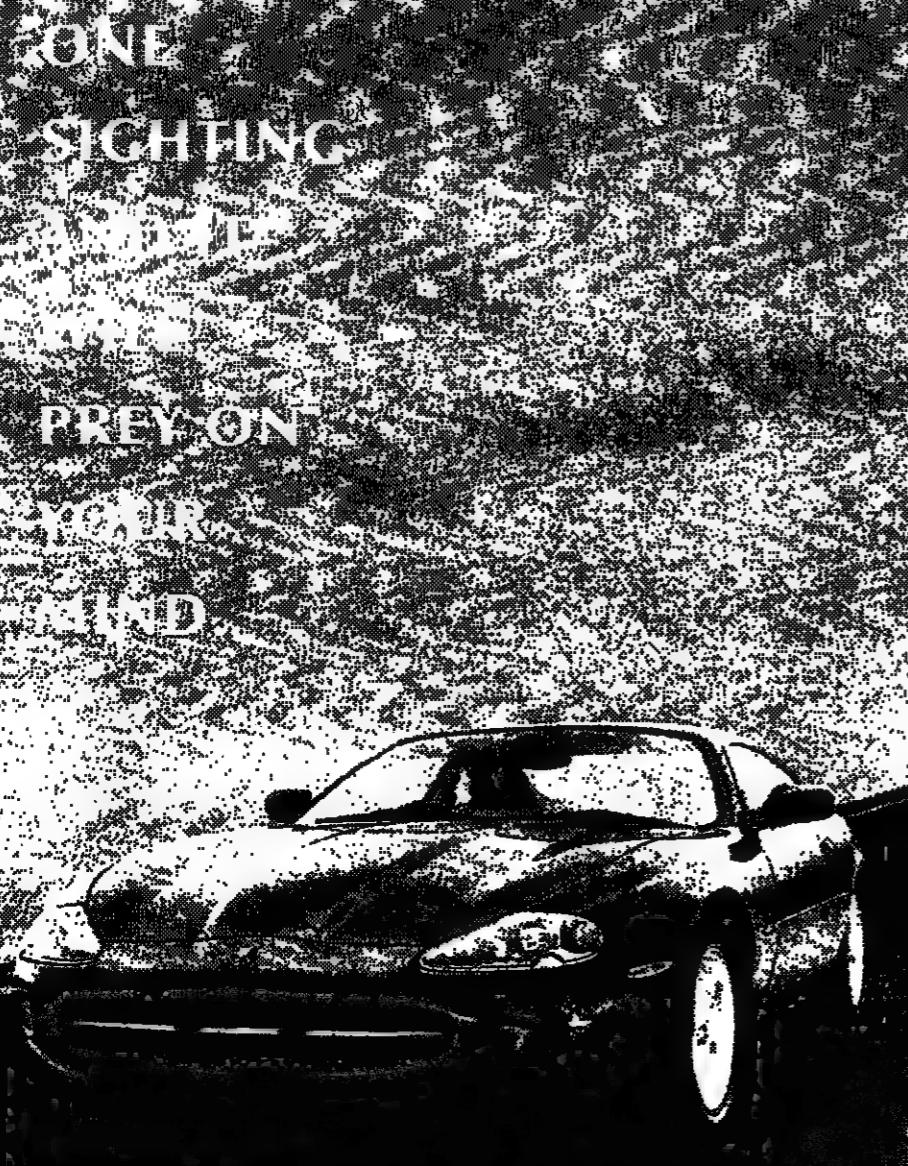
SIX British citizens were among 200 people arrested worldwide as part of Operation Green Ice, an undercover exercise to expose the illegal financial dealings of the Cali mafia family. A leading US law enforcement officer has acknowledged the help of overseas authorities, including the UK's National Criminal Intelligence Service and the Cayman Islands, in evidence to the House of Representatives. Seven of the Cali's top money managers were among those arrested, together with more than \$50 million in cash and property which was seized in a series of raids.

Greenspan growth hope

ALAN GREENSPAN, chairman of the US Federal Reserve, yesterday said the American economy has moved closer to maximum sustainable growth, the fastest the economy can grow without increasing inflation. Many economists now put that rate at about 2.25 per cent. Mr Greenspan said: "We have made significant and fundamental gains in macroeconomic performance in recent years that enhance the prospects for maximum sustainable economic growth." He said the statistic may underestimate the growth rate because of the difficulty in measuring advances in productivity.

Finelist interim rises

FINELIST GROUP, the distributor of replacement part vehicles with 199 outlets across the country, lifted first-half profits by 34 per cent and said it was pleased with second-half trading, despite the tough retail environment. In the six months to December 31, profits rose to £4.05 million before tax from £3.02 million last time. Turnover advanced to £52.6 million from £43.9 million. Earnings were 8.2p a share (6.6p). The interim dividend rises to 1.9p a share from 1.7p. The shares rose 7p to 277p.



At the Geneva Motor Show this week, a few lucky observers caught a glimpse of the new jaguar XK8 for the first time. The many who couldn't be there should call 0800 70 80 60. We'll send you a unique XK8 screensaver and put you in line for further jaguar information (as soon as more of them are spotted). *Available in PC or Apple Mac format.

JAGUAR XK8
DON'T DREAM IT. DRIVE IT.

BT market share 'must be cut'

By ERIC REGULY

PRICES for phone services in Britain will decline at a slow rate unless British Telecom, the dominant operator, is forced to lose more market share, a telecommunications study concluded yesterday.

National Utility Services, an international research firm that examines utility prices, said that strong competition, not regulation, has proved to be the most effective way of driving down prices. It said that paradoxically, the price controls imposed on BT by Oftel, the telecoms regulator, are not in the consumers' best interests because they stifle competition.

NUS said: "The telecoms giant can absorb lower prices dictated by price restrictions, but its rivals, who must follow suit and drop prices in order to stay competitive, are unable to sustain the reduction in revenue as their margins become

eroded." Energis, the telecoms subsidiary of the National Grid, and the cable companies were cited as examples of telecoms services that have been unable to gain much market share because of the regulatory regime. Twelve years after privatisation, BT still controls about 90 per cent of the market.

In its latest survey, NUS found that prices in Britain for local, national and international calls continued to fall, with international prices experiencing the biggest decline. Of the 10 countries surveyed, only Canada had cheaper international rates.

Rates for local calls, however, continue to be relatively high. Britain ranked fifth in this category; France, Italy, Sweden, the US and Canada all had cheaper tariffs. In line rentals, Britain was the fourth-cheapest.

In accordance with the standard conditions relating to the payment of the dividends declared on 7 February 1996, payments from the office of the United Kingdom Registrar will be made in United Kingdom currency at the rate of exchange of R3.9727 South African currency to £1 United Kingdom currency, this being the first available rate of exchange for remittances between the Republic of South Africa and the United Kingdom on 4 March 1996, as advised by the companies' South African bankers.

The United Kingdom currency equivalents of the dividends are therefore as follows.

Name of Company

(All companies are incorporated in the Republic of South Africa)

Gold Fields Property Company Limited

Vogelskuilrus Metl Holdings Limited

Dividend No.

Amount per share (pence)

14p

5.86p (10p)

By order of the boards
GOLD FIELDS CORPORATE SERVICES LIMITED
London Secretary
S.J. Dunning, Secretary

London Office and Office of

United Kingdom Registrar:

Gold Fields Corporate Services Limited

Greenwich House

Francis Street

London SW1P 1DH

5 March 1996

مكت

Options for change at the Stock Exchange BA takes aim at rail link MMC set to demand bid conditions

Adrift in Throgmorton Street

COMPUTERS have the eccentric logic of the village idiot. So the Stock Exchange's formal analysis of answers to its questionnaire on electronic order-driven trading systems, out this morning, could come up with almost anything.

The Exchange's consultation paper, insiders may recall, presumed it was inevitable that the dealing system defined in the 1986 Big Bang would be duplicated or abandoned. The pathetically flawed human brain noticed two *leitmotivs* in nearly nine score responses. Neither was quite what Michael Lawrence, the Exchange's short-lived chief executive, had in mind.

One was sheer amazement that the Exchange's proposals did not include the option of sticking with the system that has built London into such a strong position in stock trading. The second was disbelief that the isolated denizens of Throgmorton Street had set a timetable for fundamental reform simply to coincide with access to an electronic trading facility, which is due to be available in August. Opinions vary widely on the ultimate goal, but few understand the hurry.

Something fundamental did emerge however. There was a hectic lobbying battle between different commercial interests on the Exchange. But the market's

customers were largely unconcerned. Among fund managers, the dominant client group, apathy was rampant and ill-concealed. The issue is almost entirely an internal one, with academic regulators playing an unhelpful role from the sidelines.

John Kemp-Welch, the Exchange's plangent chairman, would be wise to shelve the proposals *sine die* with Mr Lawrence's name attached to them. Such damage limitation will only be worthwhile, however, if he or others conduct a fundamental rethink.

Exchange rivalries have flared in the absence of leadership. Mr Lawrence could only have been left to come up with his half-baked reform plan because the Exchange has suffered a gulping drain of confidence following its loss of status under the Financial Services Act and its loss of credibility after the fiasco over Taurus, the doomed electronic settlement system.

Rather than allow itself to be squeezed between the Office of Fair Trading, the querulous Securities and Investments Board and its own warring

factions, the Exchange's board should take a look at what is happening on Wall Street.

The New York Stock Exchange, once in a far worse pickle, has reasserted itself by a process of professional development. It has put the accent on continuous evolution, on improvement through investment and marketing, rather than on change for its own sake.

After handing power to two dynamic reforming chief executives, Exchange directors should ask why they have no faith in themselves. If they can find no good answer, they should make way for others.

On a wing and a prayer

ROBERT AYLING, British Airways' combative chief executive, was in fine fettle yesterday. His staff were treated to a real morale-booster — "We probably have too many managers," he reflected. Now won't that do wonders for their productivity?

But Mr Aylung soon got down to the real business. BA, scourge

of unprofitable, over-financed airlines across Europe, is taking aim at what it sees as a lame duck closer to home, the consortium awarded the fast rail link to the Channel Tunnel.

BA's beef is with the £1.4 billion, or whatever figure you believe, of state aid that is to fund the project. The world's favourite airline says this might contravene European competition regulations regarding state aid for transport projects.

BA has used the same route to challenge state aid to two other airlines, Air France and Iberia. Mr Aylung must know he is trying it on, but this should not detract from the amusement value of his remarks.

London & Continental Rail-

ways is to take over the Eurostar service, currently loss-making and costing the taxpayer money, and to build the track on which this will run. To help fund this the consortium is taking unquantified but probably substantial planning gains from redeveloping St Pancras station and other assets on the route.

Eurostar could operate profitably without the track — indeed, it must first do so, if the job is to go ahead at all. The new track is to provide a swift route to the Tunnel and a better service for Kent commuters.

Brussels has already crawled all over the deal and given its blessing, not least because European Investment Bank money is involved.

The EU competition policy is designed to stop governments from propping up their loss-making national carriers. It is not aimed at stopping all public sector investment in transport, whether a fast Tunnel or a signal box on the East Coast Main Line.

BA might find this objectionable *per se*, but it is a fact of the market in which it is required to operate. Or is BA's real

problem that one Richard Branson's Virgin, bitter rival and courtroom foe, has a chunk of the consortium? Perish the thought.

Short-circuiting a power struggle

A Monopolies and Mergers Commission decision to wave the two outstanding electricity bids through would not be a hard one to reach, given the precedent set by earlier mergers and the unanimity of view within the industry itself. Consumers can only hope the pre-conditions the MMC is likely to require are stringent enough.

The two deals are agreed, and there has been noticeably little interest from outsiders in breaking them up by mounting rival bids for Southern and Midlands. Bidder and target will have been singing from the same hymn sheet to the Commission on this one, as will that small tranche of the industry not yet bid for. The latter have no interest in disrupting the marriages and sending share prices into reverse.

The two generators, National

Power and PowerGen, are not going to balk at being required to dispose of any generating assets owned by the two regional distributors — they have, themselves, agreed the sale of 6,000 MW of their own plant. Once clearance is given, the MMC can return again if evidence of malpractice is laid before it.

The most important condition has to do with transparency, and the precedent is with the ScottishPower takeover of Manweb, which first mixed generation and distribution. The MMC required separate accounts to ensure the distributors' customers were not forced to take power at too high a price. A similar approach would cause few problems for the generators.

Party line

SO LABOUR is to insert its own statement of policy into next month's Railtrack prospectus, to allow investors to make an informed choice. Taking charge is John Prescott — although we are assured the usual tortuous Prescott prose style will not be used, so this section should be comprehensible to investors even if the rest of the document is not. The current policy is to have Railtrack "publicly owned" but not "renationalised". Hmmm. Doubtless the distinction will become clear in time.



Harry Sheridan reckons CRH can maintain its current level of investment without asking shareholders for new funds

CRH sounds warning as profits surge 38%

By CARL MORTISHED

CRH, the Irish building materials group, said that a slowdown in mainland Europe would affect earnings in the current year. Dramatic growth in Ireland and solid gains in the US and on the Continent produced a 38 per cent profits surge to £160 million for 1995 despite the impact of flooding and cold weather in the Benelux region.

Don Godson, CRH's chief executive, said that economic prospects in Ireland remained favourable but the German market was looking weak. "It would be unrealistic to expect a continuation of the 30 per cent-plus increases of the past two excellent years," he said. "Nevertheless we anticipate a further year of progress un-

dertaken by strategic acquisitions and new investments."

CRH is raising the dividend 12 per cent to 19.1p for 1995, covered 3.9 times by earnings of £35.55p, up 35 per cent. The company invested £225 million over the 12 months, including £129 million on acquisitions, a level of investment which Harry Sheridan, finance director, reckons could be maintained without calling on shareholders for new funds.

In the UK, CRH is rapidly expanding its Keyline builder merchants. It has acquired 26 branches, taking the chain to 100, and plans to increase the number to 200 outlets. CRH has secured a foothold in the expanding Polish market, buying 40 per cent of a cement

manufacturer with a 15 per cent market share.

The Irish construction boom continued in 1995. Fuelled by growth in new housing and increased demand for cement, CRH's profits in its home market grew from £36.8 million to £48.1 million. Overall volumes were 11 per cent up on the previous year but Mr Sheridan predicted a slowing down this year.

"We expect the strong markets to continue, not at the double digit rate but at the 4-5 per cent range for the next few years."

Mr Godson said the end of the IRA ceasefire could set back tourist-related construction development throughout Ireland but paradoxically, he pointed out, the peace had a

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TDG plans continued expansion

By PHILIP PANGALOS

TRANSPORT Development Group, the distribution and hire company, accompanied a 7 per cent rise in annual pre-exceptional profits with plans for further expansion through selective acquisitions and organic growth.

TDG, which has been undergoing widespread reorganisation in recent years, saw pre-tax profits rise to £36.1 million in the year to December 31, on turnover up 4.5 per cent to £510 million.

Martin Llowarch, chairman, said the rate of growth in the current year will depend on new business wins and strategic developments. Acquisitions are set to involve bolt-on deals, with the industrial division the most likely area for expansion.

Ian Rock, chief executive, predicted an improved performance for the full year and said that the interest burden had been reduced. Net gearing was 9.1 per cent (9.5 per cent). There is no dividend but the company said dividend policy would be reviewed. Shares stood at 6 pence. TDG shares added 3p to 216p.

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Trial boost for British Biotech

By ERIC REGULY

SHARES of British Biotech gained 272p to £23.20 yesterday after the biotechnology company, the country's largest, announced that its treatment for acute pancreatitis had been approved by America's Food and Drug Administration for late-stage trials.

The treatment, called Lexipant, has entered so-called phase 3 trials in the US, after successful phase 1 and 2 trials in Britain. The company said that the 18-month effort, if successful, would support a new drug application.

British Biotech also announced the expansion of trials on its Marimastat oral anti-cancer drug. They are expected to lead to late-stage trials by the end of this year.

The company reported a loss of £4.1 million in the quarter to January 31. It lost £5.6 million in the same period a year ago. The lower loss followed a £4 million payment from Glaxo Wellcome, which is sponsoring the development of British Biotech's arthritis drug.



Ian Rock, right, and Patrick Hooper, finance director

A NEWLY opened chain of pool halls helped European Leisure to a 30 per cent rise in full-year profits to £2.2 million (Alasdair Murray writes). The company welcomed proposed gaming deregulation moves which it said would improve the position further next year. In January it was forced to issue a profits warning after its Christmas takings were hit by Sunday dancing restrictions. Overall turnover increased 14 per cent to £36.7 million. The entertainment and snooker

Clothes chain sold by M&S in Canada

MARKS & SPENCER has reduced further its presence in Canada with the sale of D'Alairds Stores, a chain of 85 clothes shops, to Comark (Sarah Bagnall writes).

The disposal will result in a £25 million exceptional charge against full-year profits. Of this, £10 million relates to the write-back of goodwill previously written off, while the balance of £15 million includes the cost of write-offs and other provisions. The news came after the official stock market closed, and the shares stayed at 43p.

M&S said the sale would enable its Canadian management to concentrate solely on the group's 50 M&S stores. Last year, the M&S and D'Alairds businesses matched up combined sales of £73.9 million and operating losses of £600,000.

Momentum recently when Flextech, the American-controlled broadcaster that owns 20 per cent of Scottish Television, made it known that it was not necessarily a long-term investor.

Scottish Television reported record pre-tax profits of £20.2 million (£2 million) in the year

to December 31. The 1994 figure includes a £7.5 million loss on the disposal of Alternative International, its outfit placement subsidiary.

Operating profits more than doubled to £18.7 million on turnover that fell 15 per cent to £100.5 million because of the disposal of Alternative, and lower drama sales. Earnings per share were 22.7p against a loss of 3.78p. The final dividend of 12.25p will bring the total dividend to 16.25p, up 15 per cent.

Scottish Television also announced that it has signed a \$10 million deal with Hallmark Entertainment, a Flextech shareholder, to produce six movies in Scotland this year.

The company added that it was proceeding with plans to launch a "Tartan" cable channel by the end of 1996.

Tempus, page 28

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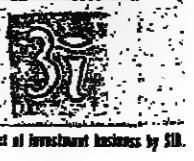
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STOCK MARKET



MICHAEL CLARK

Money strategy gives shares a bumpy ride

THE interest rate bandwagon continued to rumble on, with share prices on the London stock market, at one stage, hitting an all-time trading high. They failed to hold on to their best gains, however, as stories began circulating that the January money supply measure, M3, is about to be revised sharply higher.

The FT-SE 100 index saw its lead cut to 8.5 points by the close at 3,777.1, having touched a new intra-trading high of 3,792.5.

Traders remain confident that Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, and Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, will signal a quarter-point cut at their monthly economic meeting tomorrow. The base rate is currently 6.25 per cent, a full point above the level seen two years ago.

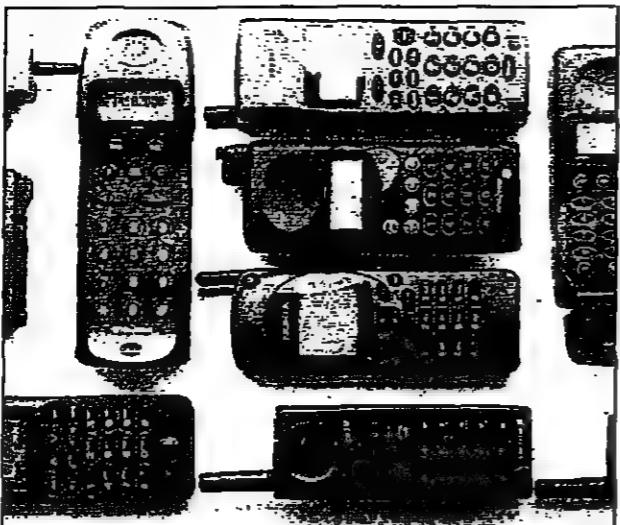
Vodafone, the mobile telephone operator, rose another 6p to 246p, stretching its lead on the week to 11.5p after ABN Amro Hoare Govett, the broker, reiterated its buy stance. Hoare is said to have raised its "sum of the parts" valuation by 20p to 300p, with the group's international operations expected to move into profit next year. Other brokers are suggesting that Vodafone's rating will also benefit from the forthcoming flotation of rival Orange.

There was revived institutional support for Hanson, with the price adding 1p to 191.5p as 11.3 million shares changed hands. Much of the support came from the US, where investors are taking a close interest in the proposed demerger.

There was also talk in London that Henderson Crosthwaite, the broker, is about to publish a bullish review of the company after increasing its break-up value from 195p to 225p a share.

A sharp rise in the number of passengers carried during February lifted British Airways 17p to 534p. Passenger revenues grew 13.4 per cent, the biggest rise since April last year. A total of six million shares were traded.

Reports that Ministry of Defence police last week raided the offices of Tarmac in Wolverhampton, London and Glasgow saw the shares touch 122p before finishing 3p lower at 119p. It follows allegations of financial irregularities relating to the Coulport nuclear armaments depot on



Phone wars saw Vodafone rise 6p on broker forecasts

the Clyde being made ready for the Trident submarine fleet.

Eurotunnel was steady at 81p, with news of a sharp jump in shuttle traffic during February coming after the official close of business. The number of tourist vehicles carried surged 21 per cent, with sharp gains also reported in other categories.

BAA, the independent airport operator, jumped 18p to 516p after a profit upgrading by Credit Lyonnais Laing, the broker. Laing has raised its forecast for the current year by £20 million to £465 million and for 1997 by £23 million to £515 million. It says the net retail spend per passenger is set to rise sharply.

Storehouse, the BH&M and Mothercare stores group, jumped 1p to 329p after revealing plans to open 50 new stores worldwide during the next year. It forms part of a link-up with the retailing arm of Hutchison Whampoa in the Far East.

Scottish Television has thrown down the gauntlet to any would-be predators and says it intends to cling on to its

independence. It emerged after Scottish announced an increase in pre-tax profits last year from £2 million to £20 million. The group says it has the backing of its two biggest shareholders, Mirror Group, 5% easier at 214p, and Flextel, 1p lighter at 524p, which between them control 40 per cent of the shares. Scottish rose 3p to 672p.

A profits warning left Park Foods 5p lower at 79p.

GILT-EDGED: Prices fell back across a wide front as a reaction set in ahead of tomorrow's monthly meeting between Kenneth Clarke and Eddie George. Brokers say the expected quarter-point cut in rates to 6 per cent is already in the price. Renewed weakness in both US Treasury bonds and German bunds provided the signal for a bout of profit-taking. Sentiment was also dented by publication of the latest US durable goods numbers and suggestions that the January M3 number is about to be revised sharply upwards.

In the futures pit, the June series of the Long Gilt fell 1£ to £107.32 as the total number of contracts completed reached 62,000.

In longs, Treasury 8 per cent 2015 was £1.16 lower at £98.76, while the shorter end Treasury 8 per cent 2000 shed a tick to £103.15.

NEW YORK: Trading on Wall Street was subdued after Monday's gains and by mid-day the Dow Jones Industrial average was 8.31 points lower at 5,591.84.

VODAFONE: SHARES BENEFIT FROM BROKERS' POSITIVE VIEWS

FT-SE all-share price index (rebased)

Source: Datascope

THE
TIMES
CITY
DIARY

Perry earns
Dutch honour

SIR Michael Perry, chairman of Unilever and knighted by the Queen in 1994, has now been honoured by Queen Beatrix of The Netherlands. He has been appointed a Commander in the Order of Orange Nassau, the highest grant to non-nationals, in recognition of services to Anglo-Dutch relations in commerce and industry. The honour was presented to Sir Michael in London yesterday by the Dutch Ambassador.

Healthy skin

THE latest money-spinner in New York for investors prepared to take a punt, who are not too squeamish, is not computers or pork bellies, but human skin. Integra LifeSciences, which launched itself on the market in January, has already shot to a 50 per cent premium after approval from the Food and Drug Administration this week for its test-tube skin. Ortec, which also launched in January, but does not yet have approval, is lagging with a 20 per cent premium.

Bankers' refuge

WHAT is the collective noun for a bunch of ex-bankers? I suggest Caspian, in honour of the investment group set up by former Baring Securities man Christopher Heath in June 1995. The latest banker to join Caspian Securities board is Wilfried Thalwitz, former senior vice-president at the World Bank, who will be responsible for developing business in Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union and the Mediterranean. It is a patch he knows well.

Thalwitz 64 last Friday, is an economist trained in Germany who joined the World Bank in 1963. At Caspian, he will rub shoulders with Robert McNamara, President of the World Bank 1968-81, and, of course, with Rupert Penman-Rea, former deputy governor of the Bank of England who joined Caspian as non-executive chairman last August.



Thalwitz: new job

Capital wit

THE Labour Party's rallying cry of a "stakeholder society" has encouraged stockbroker Foster & Brathwaite to have a little fun at Tony Blair's expense. The broker is launching its own "Stakeholder" savings plan designed to appeal to anyone saving for school fees. "The savings plan has several features, but no Clause Four whatsoever. This is caring capitalism," F&B Investments' managing director Malcolm Murray says in his best deep blue voice.

Rock'n'hold

ALTHOUGH Independent Insurance spent £100,000 last spring sponsoring the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the company's chief executive Michael Bright has let slip that he is something of a rocker. As independent reported year-end results yesterday, telephone callers on hold were treated to Rod Stewart's anthem, *Maggie May*. "The girls on the desk chose Rod," Bright explained. "I'd rather we played Status Quo — it brings back memories of days gone by," the fifty-something rocker says.

COLIN CAMPBELL



Boeing has stayed ahead of the game by using profits from its lucrative 747 to cross-subsidise aircraft that compete with Airbus products

Can East champion Airbus cause in jumbo dogfight?

Ross Tieman on a vision that aims to keep Europe's aircraft in the skies

Blessed and blighted by its share of dreamers, Europe's aircraft industry needs a new vision to save it from creeping oblivion. Thirty years ago, a Franco-German inspiration, Airbus industrie, rescued the industry from the successive commercial failures of the British Comet, Trident, VC10 and BAC-111 airliners, the French Caravelle, and the Anglo-French Concorde. Belatedly joined by the British, and in a small way by Spanish interests, Airbus has successfully challenged American dominance of the civil jet market, selling more than 1,300 planes to 130 operators worldwide.

But the vision of limited collaboration by Europe's national champions is no longer adequate to the new world order of the 1990s. Boeing, the world's airliner champion, has responded with a cost-cutting drive and aggressive marketing that is winning the company the lion's share of new orders.

An enormous market is emerging in Asia, where air travel is soaring at up to 10 per cent a year, twice the rate in the West. Governments in China, India, Korea and Singapore are anxious to develop indigenous aircraft industries, both to enhance the technological capability of their economies, and ease the balance of payments burden imposed by ordering aircraft overseas.

Asian aerospace companies, having cut their engineering teeth on fighter planes built under licence, are now keen to turn their capacity and low-cost base to commercial advantage.

The Asian market, money and ambitions offer a way out of the excruciating double bind in which Airbus and its parent companies, are now gripped.

For Boeing's new-found ability to undercut them in the market place is but a symptom of troubles closer to home. After the Second World War, half of Europe had an over-large arms industry, and the other half had heaps of rubble. But as East-West tension mounted, every nation concluded that it needed to be able to build aircraft for its own defence. But the electronic revolution of the 1980s turned an aircraft into a mere platform for systems that account for up to four fifths of its cost. Costs, both in development and production, reached

the stratosphere. European nations can no longer afford to develop military planes alone.

Even in America, with an arms market to match those of Europe combined, the arms trade has seen a series of mega-mergers to achieve the economies of scale now required in a post-Cold War era of standstill defence spending. In 1997, American spending on defence is now planned to be the lowest, as a proportion of national product, since 1938. If Europe is to match the step-change in costs and competitiveness achieved by the Americans, its aerospace industry must consolidate, fast. The British and Germans have known it for several

years. Now the French are finally facing up to reality. Over the next two years, Europe's planemakers will be roaring from corporate airfield to corporate airfield in an aerial circus of courtship rituals. Dick Evans, British Aerospace's chief executive, already has Jürgen Schrempp, the Daimler-Benz chairman, flying wing-man in subtle merger manoeuvres. Their challenge is to teach the same hard-learned commercial tricks to the French industry champions, Aérospatiale, in civil aircraft, and Dassault, in warplanes, and then tap on Saab of Sweden, Alenia of Italy and Casa of Spain to the formation.

Quite how the new Euro-structures, in either jetliners or warplanes, will look cannot yet be discerned. But the vision of what they are seeking to achieve is at last becoming clear. Airbus is a curious animal, a partnership between Aérospatiale and Daimler-Benz, each with 37.9 per cent; BAE, with 20 per cent; and Casa, with 4.2 per cent. Structured as a Groupeement d'intérêt Economique, it incurs no profits or losses, but divides

returns and shortfalls among the partners, who are responsible for borrowings. When it comes to allocating work, the partners bid against one another in a curious "club of lions". To maximise its share of Airbus profits, a partner must get the biggest possible margin on the components and aerostuctures it supplies, without being undercut by another partner when bids are invited for the work.

The effect is to peg Airbus costs to those of the least cost-effective partners, Aérospatiale and Casa, and saddle its salesmen with higher than necessary prices in their campaigns. Somehow, a way must be found to bring the manufacturing plants owned by BAE and its partners under the control of Airbus. BAE is keen to transfer its assets, provided the others first carry the costs of making their plants competitive. The changing international environment makes structural reform urgent. But Airbus has another problem. In many sales competitions, Boeing uses profits on its one product that still enjoys a market monopoly, the Jumbo 747, to cross-subsidise aircraft that compete with Airbus products. Result: victory.

The Airbus partners therefore face three crucial challenges: they must create a structure that drives down production costs; develop and sell a new mega-jumbo, the 500-seat to 800-seat A3XX, that will allow them to compete with Boeing across its full product range; and accommodate the ambitions of Asian governments and industrialists.

Ironically, Asian aerospace ambitions offer a partial solution to the problem of finding \$2 billion to \$12 billion to develop the A3XX. Richard Lapham, BAE's finance director, believes that Asian

sales competitions, Boeing uses profits on its one product that still enjoys a market monopoly, the Jumbo 747, to cross-subsidise aircraft that compete with Airbus products. Result: victory.

At the same time, AIR must quit the manufacture of turboprops, a low-cost, over-competitive sector whose products are being supplanted by jets.

So there is the vision. Airbus restructured, with two new planes to fill the gaps at the bottom and the top of its product range. Airbus tied in with Asian partners to provide market access, cheap finance, and low-cost manufacturing plants. Airbus off the ropes, and at the throat of Boeing.

Asia offers way out of the excruciating double bind in which Airbus is gripped

readiness to accept low or deferred returns to gain industry entry, combined with low-interest launch aid from European governments and a balance of market-rate money could make the cost of financing A3XX commercially viable.

The first fruit of this cocktail is likely to be a regional jet. Orchestrated by Peking, aerospace companies in China, Korea, Singapore and India are seeking western partners to build a new 100-seat jet, the Asian Express 100.

The frontrunner for this deal is Aero International Regional, a marketing and after-sale joint venture owned equally by BAE, Aérospatiale and Alenia. This project has to be brought into an alliance with Airbus, so that the plane becomes in effect the smallest in the Airbus range. To succeed in the market, airlines must be confident that the new plane is of Airbus quality, and benefits from the Airbus after-sales network. Ideally, it must share a common system of controls with the Airbus A320 series, and their larger brethren, the A330/A340.

This will not be easy. AIR is a first step to integrated management and manufacture of the Avro regional jet range built by BAE, together with BAE's Jetstream turboprop operations and ATR, a turboprop manufacturing joint venture owned by Aérospatiale and Alenia. Daimler, which pulled the plug on its own Dutch regional subsidiary, Fokker, must also be brought on board.

The AE100 will be a twin-jet successor to the Avro. China is adamant that final assembly must take place in its own factories. Since final assembly accounts for only 5 per cent of cost, the Europeans have no objections in principle, although a European assembly line may be needed to give buyers sufficient confidence in the quality of the product.

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Michael Steinberger on Hong Kong's fiscal prudence

Few handouts before handover



Chris Patten, accused of infecting Hong Kong with 'the virus of British welfarism'

sions blocking agreement on a blueprint for the colony's economic development. Though Peking hopes to inherit an economic powerhouse unencumbered by social concerns, there is an emerging consensus in Hong Kong that the Government must do more to help those unable to cope with the colony's rather unforgiving brand of capitalism. Despite the Chinese criticism, the colonial administration will leave office next year with its reputation for fiscal rectitude largely intact. Public assistance has increased over 70 per cent since the early 1990s, but the growth started from a very low base and was initiated in response to problems that even the business community agreed required attention. Moreover, the Government has kept its spending in line with the rate of economic expansion. The public sector still accounts for less than 20 per cent of Hong Kong's gross

domestic product and the colony's tax burden remains light.

Some critics believe the administration has managed Hong Kong's money too well: years of budget surpluses have lined the colony's coffers with nearly \$20 billion in fiscal reserves. This year's budget is also expected to be in the black. Though little more than \$3 billion is earmarked for the post-1997 government, the entire surplus will likely be handed over, together with

\$39 billion in foreign exchange reserves and another \$11 billion from the sale of public land. Chris Patten, Hong Kong's Governor, calls it "the biggest dowry since Cleopatra."

The enormous amount of money being set aside has so far failed to reassure Peking that Britain will not strip the cupboards bare before leaving. Similarly, Mr Patten was accused of infecting Hong Kong with "the virus of British welfarism" after proposing a pay-as-you-go pension scheme for the colony two years ago.

Members of Hong Kong's Legislative Council will no longer stay reticent. Once willing to defer to the executive branch on many fiscal matters, the legislature has become more assertive since elections last September when, for the first time, all 60 representatives were elected.

Advocacy groups, armed with statistics showing that the gap between rich and poor is widening, have increased the popularity of the movement, which reached fever pitch last month following a cold spell that was blamed for the deaths of more than 100 senior citizens.

With or without the Legislative Council, the debate over economic priorities and the role of government in Hong Kong will be on the agenda long after Britain has left.



ANTHONY HARRIS

A bull steer from Canada's great veteran bear

They must have been listening in Wall Street. Bears from all over gathered in London yesterday to hear about the future — the coming Wall Street crash, that is — from their house journal, *Bank Credit Analyst*. BCA has traditionally read like a Canadian book of the Apocalypse, redone as a part-work. Early warnings about thin financial ice, or the debt trap, or about speculative climates (maximum opportunity, maximum risk) were its core message. "Early", it is true, was itself a warning: BCA readers needed strong nerves while they waited for the inevitable. But if you were patient, the danger signals were reliable.

Imagine the surprise of the faithful, then, when they heard a message which would form a useful text for any high-pressure equity salesman. European fund managers, notoriously short of Wall Street, were roundly denounced: what they failed to understand was that the great bull run is well founded in the new US miracle.

The US is a fiscal model, with stable debt and a deficit which makes the Maastricht criteria look permissible. Its economy is dynamic, inventive, flexible, supported by strong investment, and growing faster than the figures show. Profits have consistently beaten even bullish forecasts, but, in terms of GDP, are still far below their 1990s highs: earnings growth may slow, but could go on outpacing the real economy for years.

Onward and upward, then: but this was still a BCA meeting. Yes, there will be a crash — or more probably, a crashette. The economic picture may be sound, but the financial ice is thin. The valuation and speculation indices (only BCA claims to be able to calculate such indices and chart them) have strayed into overvalued and highly speculative territory, but not very far yet. A correction is due, but probably from higher values, and triggered by strong growth, implying rising interest rates.

And it will be limited. The private investor will ensure that the most fascinating chart showed personal holdings.

It is the emerging markets which are due to reappear (though not those of the old Warsaw Pact countries, seen as trapped between Eurostagflation and Russian chaos). Mexico is already old news in stock-market terms but its economic revival is not just a matter for investors. It will, on BCA numbers, add up to a full point to US growth, and go far to correct the US trade deficit. This leads to the final surprise: BCA is a bull not only of equities, but of the dollar. Possible targets: 1.40 against the yen, 1.70 against the mark — enough to revive Japanese profits, but not to revive European competitiveness.

All this from the Great Bear? It is hard to believe, and two doubts nag: it was all economics, with hardly a word so far about finance, home territory for BCA. And the final BCA speaker sounded like a bear, not a bull. They even grow their own contrarians. Take your pick.

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Independent steels itself for bitter battle of insurers

By MARIANNE CURPHEY

BRITISH insurers are locked in a cut-throat battle for market share which could result in small or medium-sized companies withdrawing hurt or being swallowed up. Independent Insurance said yesterday.

Michael Bright, chief executive of the small, quoted company, accused rivals of "irresponsible behaviour" in cutting rates and, as a consequence, profits in the coming months. He hinted that Independent would be keen to make an acquisition at the right price.

"Some insurers, including a number of composites, are writing business at below cost price," he said. "We believe that some operators will be forced to withdraw from the market and, therefore, we will look to take advantage of this to consolidate our position when the upturn comes. We have the resources, broker connections and capacity in place to do so."

Independent's share price

rose 39p to 479p yesterday after the company reported its ninth successive year of profitable growth with pre-tax profits up 70 per cent to a record £35.5 million in the year to December 31 (£20.9 million). Gross written premiums grew 38 per cent to £411 million (£295 million).

Mr Bright's comments follow General Accident's announcement last month that it would be raising personal motor insurance premiums by an average 4 per cent. Other motor insurers have confirmed that premiums are likely to stabilise or even rise slightly.

Mr Bright, however, claimed motor rates might carry on falling until the autumn.

Independent acquired La Palatine, the French insurer, last December, and Mr Bright said he intended to "take some time to digest" it before making further acquisition. He added: "However, if the right company came along, we

would bid for it. We have a strong enough balance sheet to be able to buy another company."

In 1994, Independent gained a significant foothold in the London marine and protection indemnity markets through the purchase of the general insurance business of Aegon, the Dutch insurer.

Independent, which floated in 1993 at 225p per share, was in a difficult market last year by carrying out frequent surveys of the commercial property it covers to ensure safety procedures are properly followed.

A final net dividend of 6.65p per share will be paid, making 11.25p for the year (9.5p).

General Accident announced yesterday that it will provide services to property and casualty clients of Trygg-Hansa, the international Swedish insurer, in Europe, North America, the Middle and Far East and the Pacific Basin.

Record profits: Michael Bright, left, and Gareth Ramsey of Independent Insurance



BSM advances as the number of pupils grows

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

BSM, the driving tuition company, motored to a 10.6 per cent increase in half-year profits to £5.4 million.

The company said that the number of pupils had increased ahead of the launch of the Government's theory test in July. While the group expects demand to return to normal levels after the summer, it is confident that its new theory-test training products will help to further boost its market share.

Paul Massey, chief executive, said that BSM was ready to take advantage of the theory test and had prepared literature in association with Virgin Publishing to be distributed through the BSM network of offices and retail outlets.

The British learner driver market has grown steadily over the past ten years mainly due to the increase in the number of second cars on the road. There were around 85,000 learner drivers on Britain's roads last year.

BSM said that after a slow summer, the numbers picked up dramatically in the autumn quarter and were 20 per cent ahead of 1994. BSM said its gross margin had stabilised at around 21 per cent after slipping back earlier in the half year. The company operates off a relatively fixed cost base and said its margins improved with the influx of drivers in the autumn onwards.

Overall turnover increased 5 per cent to £24 million. The profit advance came despite no increase in the franchise fees paid by BSM instructors but benefited from a one-off £175,000 release of a pension fund provision.

The BSM network expanded with nine new branches opened, taking the total to 148 across the country. The company expects to open a further six this year. The average number of instructors also increased by 65 to 2,181. BSM leads the UK driving tuition market with 16 per cent.

BSM said it had 180 clients for its advanced driving courses for corporate instructors. The dividend rose 7 per cent to 6.9p, payable on May 8. Shares closed up 6p at 170p.

Hiscox agrees £35.5m purchase

Hiscox Dedicated Insurance Fund has agreed to acquire Economic Insurance Holdings for £35.5 million, the first acquisition of a DTI-approved insurance company by a Lloyd's group.

Separately, the company is to acquire the balance of 75 per cent of the Hiscox Lloyd's managing agency it does not already own.

The combined group had gross premium income of £525 million in 1995 — £450 million through Hiscox at Lloyd's and £75 million through Economic Insurance.

Highway stake

Welsh Water, the privatised utility, has made an equity investment in the concession to design, build, finance and operate the Melbourne City Linkurban highway in Australia. The project is a 22km eight-lane highway through Melbourne. Welsh Water has a stake of A\$30 million (£14.9 million) in the project or 6.6 per cent of the equity.

WSP advances

WSP Group, the consulting engineering company, increased pre-tax profits to £1.8 million (£1.2 million) in 1995. Earnings were 4.7p (3.8p) a share. The total dividend is lifted to 2.2p (2p) a share, with a final 1.1p (1p) due May 7.

Lynx expands

Lynx Holdings, the UK software company, is to acquire Tesoft, the largest provider of software and systems to the Spanish automotive distribution industry, for an initial £6.44 million. Tesoft, which employs 150 people, works with motor distributors and dealers in Spain. In 1995 its pre-tax profits were £618,000 on turnover of £5.8 million.

£2m charge covers VIP jet

Hunting makes Fokker provision

By GEORGE SIVELL

HUNTING, the aviation and defence group, has been hit by the collapse of Fokker, the beleaguered Dutch aircraft maker that has been fighting for survival since Daimler Benz, its German parent, cut a cash lifeline on January 22.

Fokker was forced to seek protection from its creditors a day later leaving Hunting saying yesterday that it is to make an "appropriate provision" in its 1995 accounts against debt due by Fokker of £2 million.

However, Hunting said any reduction in work from Fokker will not damage future prospects for Hunting's aviation division. Most of the amount owing relates to the supply of a VIP interior for a Fokker 70 aircraft which was carried out during 1995 and invoiced in December.

Meanwhile, Fokker is to receive an additional bank loan of ten million guilders (£4 million), the Dutch Government said. The money will be provided by ABN Amro and

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FILM
Oscar time again: will an Italian art movie edge out *Apollo 13* for Best Film?



THEATRE 1
A customs-busting yarn from Cornwall launches a season of regional companies at the Donmar



THEATRE 2
... while at the Tricycle a true story raises disturbing questions but makes a bad play



DANCE
Not much remains of *Petipa* in Northern Ballet Theatre's spirited overhaul of *Don Quixote*

DANCE

The Don goes on

NORTHERN Ballet Theatre's relationship to *Don Quixote* is in danger of becoming a never-ending saga, with three versions of the ballet in not many more years. The scenario of the three stagings stays largely the same; what changes are the choreographers' names; this time we have the combined effort of Christopher Gable and Michael Barrett-Pink.

Not only have Gable and his team decided to improve on *Petipa's* 1869 original, they have so cut and added to Minkus's score that it becomes a boggling identify-the-music challenge that includes the Minkus of *Paquita* and *La Bayadère* as well as Drigo (*Corsaire pas de deux*) and Glazunov (*Raymonda*). John Longstaff's orchestration and the company's smallish ensemble played with a depth and colour that achieved a deceptively large sound.

Not a lot remains of *Petipa's*

Don Quixote
Grand Theatre,
Leeds

original choreography, although the glittering final act *pas de deux* seemed reasonably familiar, blazingly danced by Denis Malinikine and Shannon Lilly (here called Matador and His Lady).

Not a lot remains of *Petipa's* creaky tale either. Dulcinea, Don Quixote's imaginary ideal, now exists merely as a projected back-wall image and the Don's dream is populated by unnamed female visions. The story of Kitri and Basilio is condensed into the first act so that by its end Charlotte Broom and Daniel De Andrade — a nicely spirited pair — could both have gone home, except that Broom was also the last act's Duchess in a convoluted episode featuring Moorish slaves and a wooden horse.

Each act brings on a fresh cast of individuals; the Don and Sancho Panza are the only constants. That gives the company a fine array of meaty roles which they grasp avidly. Steven Wheeler (Don Quixote) and Jeremy Kerridge (Sancho Panza) among them. In this they are handsomely abetted by Tim Goodchild's beautiful refurbishment designs.

NADINE MEISNER



Will it be art for art's sake, money for Oscar's sake on March 25? Both the \$24 million-grossing *Il Postino* (top) and the \$300 million cash cow *Apollo 13* have been nominated in the Best Picture category of this year's awards

Art takes on the colour of money

Five years ago, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences thought its members might benefit from a little refresher course in the whys and wherefores of voting for Oscars. The leaflet was called *Notes on Voting*. When judging costume design, members were advised not to plump automatically for the period film with the nicest frocks, but to ponder whether the clothes pushed forward the story or characters. When judging sound, the ears should stop being impressed by loudness alone, and should consider whether the noises were smoothly engineered or 'real'. When it came to the Best Picture category, the Academy made the boldest suggestion of all: forget about box-office success, it said. Just vote on artistic achievement.

It might have added: "And remember, pigs can fly!" For the Oscar ceremony has always been the occasion on which the Hollywood industry gives itself an enormous hug; and who would want to shine a spotlight on a little squirm of a film that only critics liked? In 1991, when the Academy tried out its notes on voting, *Dances With Wolves*, a film too long and big to ignore, won the Best Picture prize, along with five others. This year, nominations for Best Picture include Tom Hanks's near-fatal trip into space, *Apollo 13*, whose box-office gross worldwide tops \$34 million; Mel Gibson's medieval epic *Braveheart* (\$178 million at the last count); and the Australian charmer *Babe* — the film where pigs can talk, if not fly — which has earned \$183 million.

But Mammon does not rule completely, and this year's Oscar contest, due to be fought on March 25, reveals a particularly interesting tussle between the demands of art and commerce. Something inside the Academy voter tells him or her that *Batman Forever*, although a money earner to rival *Apollo 13*, is not Best Picture material. It lacks dignity, importance; you can almost smell the popcorn being devoured. Genre movies like this are always assigned technical awards. Thus the Batman adventure misses out on the major categories, but wins nominations for photography, sound, and sound effects editing. The nuclear submarine drama *Crimson Tide* receives a similar fate; so does *Waterworld*.

Something inside the Acad-

What hope does a subtitled film have of winning this year's Best Film Oscar? A big one, says Geoff Brown

my members also tell them to rally round *Sense and Sensibility*, which received seven nominations, from Best Picture downwards. To susceptible Americans, Ang Lee's treatment of Jane Austen's novel reeks of class. Characters talk properly. They ride horses and sip tea. All the culture of the Old World is there. And it stars (and was written by) Emma Thompson — so droll, such a saint, so clever.

Yet such a civilised English-flavoured film remains an acquired taste in America. *Sense* is still in the throes of its release in America, where it has currently taken \$33 million, although room for further expansion may be limited. Indeed, one exhibitors' representative, quoted in the trade paper *Variety*, suggests that it would be hard to get bookings for the film more than 100 miles from the ocean. They ride different kinds of horses in Wyoming.

However, the truly intriguing highbrow contestant this year is not *Sense and Sensibility*, but *Il Postino*, the heartwarming tale of a simple Italian whose eyes are opened to poetry and romance when he delivers post to the exiled writer Pablo Neruda.

A subtitled film like this, which has taken \$12 million in America (and double that abroad), only reaches the Academy ballot after colossal lobbying. Miramax, the American distributors, reportedly spent as much on the Oscar campaign as on acquiring domestic and world rights in the first place — \$1.5 million.

During the winter months, trade papers have carried regular and tasteful advertisements rhapsodising over the merits of *Il Postino*, pointing out its peculiar status as an Italian film directed by an Englishman, Michael Radford. According to Academy rules, this precludes it as a candidate for the Best Foreign Language Film award. But spare your tears, readers. The ads continue: "We take

great pride that this remarkable motion picture remains eligible for consideration in all other Academy Award categories — including Best Actor, Best Director, Best Original Screenplay and Best Picture of the Year". Oddly enough, *Il Postino* has been nominated in every one of those categories, plus one more — Best Original Dramatic Score.

Miramax's manoeuvrings have concealed the fact that the film's star actor, Massimo Troisi, who died of heart disease 12 hours after shooting finished, is regarded in Italy as the film's codirector, and was credited as such on its premiere in Venice. Still, there is no doubt the film's genuine appeal to the more enlightened Academy voter. In an industry dominated by hardware movies made to a formula, *Il Postino* speaks up for ordinary human feelings.

The rest of the Best Picture candidates take off into fantasy or distant worlds. In *Braveheart*, Gibson strides the 13th century with wild knotted hair and a kilt. In *Babe*, a talking pig teaches lessons in gallantry and politeness. Hanks, up in the special effects sky in *Apollo 13*, relives the big drama of 1970. And, in *Sense and Sensibility*, Austen's heroines wrestle between suitors among England's rolling hills.

Il Postino is a period film too (the year is 1952). But you never feel the past as an encumbrance. Although the direction is plain and a trifle lethargic, Radford and Troisi cut through to the heart of the matter — human beings.

Judged by history, *Il Postino* only has an outside chance of winning on March 25. Since the first Oscar ceremony in 1929, there have been four other foreign-language films up for Best Picture. The first was Renoir's war masterpiece *La Grande Illusion* in 1938; the most recent was Bergman's searing *Cries and Whispers* in 1973. None of them won.

But in some ways the nominations themselves are booty enough for a foreign-language film. Americans need a shave and a poke with a sharp stick before they will see a subtitled film, supposing exhibitors give them the chance and the word "Oscar" on a poster, even if it is followed by "nomination", works wonders in stimulating interest. That, ultimately, is what the Oscars are all about. Not art, just the art of putting bums on seats.

THEATRE: Fine fantasy on tour from Devon and Cornwall, but real-life tragedy makes for poor drama

The haloes say hello

Little White Lies
Croydon Warehouse

ANGELS and old stepladders: Theatre Alibi's marriage of the fantastical and the lowly can be truly charming, almost transcendental. This young troupe, up from Devon (and returning to tour the South West), arrive in big black boots and wave hello.

This cornically attractive threesome, a pair of gangly lads and one short sturdy lass (Emma Rice, rather like Judi Dench reincarnated as an experimental vaudouvillian), dress in downbeat, wartime clothes. In what looks like a storeroom undergoing decoration — canvas, boxes, bare shelves — they conjure up other worlds. These hover between bedtime stories, religious visions and squiffy trips.

Little White Lies is a quartet of tales. An angel with elated gold wings is flummoxed about the quickest way from A to B by two crows in featherly bowlers. A young down-and-out slips through an open door at Ogdensburg and finds a blessed bottle of pink spirits that briefly lifts him to a happier world where everything is coming up roses.

Hole-in-the-wall machines throw out money like confetti. The tramp's dream-digger materialises miraculously, a steering wheel on Rice's head resembling a halo. But the drink fails to bring his father back to life.

In the third story, a photographer recalls capturing a woman's death. In the last, a nun falls in love with her gawky guardian angel who was injured saving her life but eventually flies away, moving — in a beautiful metaphor — from a lover to a son.

At points the stories seem to be a delight in story-telling. After a few moments in which I struggled to

sideways with a rasp of breath.

The photographer, facing us, repeatedly clicks his camera. His flash, turned backwards, illuminates the blackness and the woman jolts with each flare, boots banging against a wooden box, her heart violently stopped or miraculously resuscitated by his photography.

Directed by Nikki Sved, Alibi is a tiny company of enormous, curious inventiveness. Its children's show, *Fly-By-Night*, will be playing at Wimbledon's Polka Theatre in April.

KATE BASSETT

This much fun must be illegal

The King of Prussia
Donmar Warehouse

OVER the next five weeks the Donmar is importing work from Ireland, Wales and Scotland; but it launches its "four corners" season by introducing us to a company from a less obvious Celtic nook. Kneehigh Theatre has been touring Cornwall for the past 14 years without making any noise that has reached this particular pair of metropolitan ears. On the evidence of Mike Shepherd's production of Nick Darke's *King of Prussia*, that is my loss, and an indisputable gain for the land of caravans, lobster pots, defunct tin mines and retired pirates with parrots on their shoulders.

The title is the sobriquet of one John Carter, a late 18th-century smuggler and, in his way, a decent man as ever left a brandy in a helpful vicar's porch. He is more inclined to rescue a foie than kill him and takes his pole position in the local economy seriously. Village after village is dependent on his evading the punitive duties of the time for person after person is involved in the booze chain; and he lets nobody down.

One of Kneehigh's qualities would

Poor show in custody

20-52

Tricycle

place next month — and by collaborating with Jeremy Weller, the director of the Grassmarket Project, and his troupe of non-professional actors, she has clearly raised the profile of her case. But the events they choose to highlight make a dreadful play: repetitive, verbally impoverished and profoundly uninvolving. There is no point in saying otherwise.

While I hope that one day a glorious act of justice will be performed, I must point out that she has allowed herself to be presented as a callous individual whose life is a mess. The devisers of the play show her arguing with her supporters, slagged off by her mother-in-law, cheated by her surviving brother and fighting her abusive husband. She even sneers at the Times journalist who has been championing her case but is reluctantly obliged to move on to another story.

The characters are no more than stiff thumbnail sketches put together by writers with stiff thumbs, who have no confidence in their ideas and therefore present the same few again and again.

The husband is inarticulate and jealous, the brother shiftless, the man from the Commission for Racial Equality a twerp: each gets a scene with the heroine to show how unreliable he is, and how high the odds are stacked against her sanity.

Only the twerp (David Hodgson) knows how to speak dialogue, and most of the others express impatience by taking three steps this way and three steps that. The production (Weller) is tedious; the lighting a disaster. I wish the heroine well and hope that her legal advisers are better equipped than this well-mean but feeble promotion.

Londoners will miss. After all, whole communities are dependent on a fishing industry that feels is impeded by Brussels, and many people must wonder if Carter's attitude to the rules isn't the right one. But the point is put over with a sly wink, not a hammer. The mood is more mirth than menacing — how could it be otherwise with a baker called Gilbert Giddy doing his bit for the smuggling syndicate? And yet things never get silly or facetious.

Clearly another of Kneehigh's qualities is agility of performance. Bill Mitchell's set consists of little more than an ad-hoc mast, a tarpaulin and the odd barrel, but that is enough. The six-person cast rattles purposefully along, turning on fresh characters as if with light switches, and picking up cues as if with electromagnets. Let's name them all: Giles King, Bee Applebee, Mary Woodvine, Charlie Barneput, Carl Grose and, as a bright, sharp, unpretentiously chivalric King of Prussia, Tristan Sturrock. And let's hope they make another visit to the smoke very soon.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

JEREMY KINGSTON

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CHOICE 1
Michael Bolton rolls out his greatest hits — and opera?
VENUE: Tonight at Wembley, then touring



CHOICE 2
The LSO pays a sixtieth birthday tribute to composer Steve Reich
VENUE: Tonight at the Barbican



CHOICE 3
Works by Bacon and Freud go on show in *Tate on the Tyne*
VENUE: Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle



VISUAL ART
From painting to ballet design, and back again: the remarkable career of Nicholas Georgiadis

LONDON

MICHAEL BOLTON For all the criticism directed at him, Bolton's schmaltziness, showboating tendencies are anchored in an extraordinarily powerful singing voice. With a mix of Ray Charles and Eric Clapton, currently promoting his Christmas/Holiday 1995-1996 album, he will be singing plenty of old favourites, along with a few brand new ones. Tickets from £15-£20. Tel: 0171-900 1234. Tonight, Fri 8pm Sat 7pm, Sat 11pm. Sat 12pm Sun 1pm. Mar 13-14. £18-£20. Tel: 0171-401 0000; Mar 13 and 14. Birmingham, NEC (0121-789 4138); Mar 15, Manchester, Arndale (0161-834 4477), Mar 20, Glasgow, SEC (0141-246 999).

WHAT'S ON All details of what's on in London are in the *What's On* section, or online at www.tate.org.uk. To save Reich, paying tribute to one of the great contemporary composers with tonight's programme of *Cleopatra Hands*, Eight Seven Seven Seven Seven Seven Seven, joined by Alasdair Grey to play *Hands Over the Theatre*, Dublin's Abbey Theatre starts its unmissable two-week Well of Franklin Macmillan's classic *Hand of God* and *Hand of the Devil*, followed by *Songs of Summer* and *Marching Towards the Somme*.

□ 1988: Emma Fielding, Jason Isaacs and Adam Katz play the lead roles in Craig Raine's version of Racine's *Bérénice*. Directed by Peter Hall and staged by Massimo's son, An interstage concert that nearly works. Impressive acting. Almeida, Almeida Street, N1 (0171-359 4404) Mon-Sat, 8pm; Mat, Sat, 4pm □

□ **CHAPTER TWO**: Tom Conti and Judi Dench star in a new York-Yorkers writing towards each other in Neil Simon's comedy. Not his best. Gielgud, Shakesbury Avenue, W1 (0171-944 5069) Mon-Fri, 8pm; Sat, 1pm. Sun, 2pm. Mat, Sat, 8pm □

□ **THE CONFIDENTIAL WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**: (ABRIDGED) The RSC (Reduced Shakespeare Company) arranges with the popular, potty-tough-handling of the bard. *The Merchant of Venice*, *Twelfth Night*, *Measure for Measure*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Comedy of Errors*, *Timon of Athens*, *Pericles*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Henry V*, *Richard III*, *King Lear*, *Othello*, *As You Like It*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Twelfth Night*, *Measure for Measure*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Comedy of Errors*, *Timon of Athens*, *Pericles*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Henry V*, *Richard III*, *King Lear*, *As You Like It*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Twelfth Night*, *Measure for Measure*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Comedy of Errors*, *Timon of Athens*, *Pericles*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Henry V*, *Richard III*, *King Lear*, *As You Like It*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Twelfth Night*, *Measure for Measure*, *Romeo and Juliet*, 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**■ OPERA**

Silbersee is staged in Dessau as Kurt Weill's home town begins a festival in his honour

**■ MUSIC 1**

Boldness and vigour comes from Nikolaius Harnoncourt in a night of authentic Haydn

THE TIMES ARTS
**■ MUSIC 2**

... while two suites by Miles Davis and Gil Evans are given new life in the Fifties Festival



... and Heinrich Schiff is among an array of fine cellists displaying their talents

Why the Nazis feared Weill

Could Weill become to Dessau what Handel is to Halle and Bach to Leipzig? It is an engaging thought, and one doubtless passing through the minds of the city fathers and Anhalt Land politicians as, after modest beginnings, the fourth Kurt Weill Festival runs through the week, focusing on a slap-up new production of *Der Silbersee* and supported by concerts of both his secular and religious music.

Dessau has not been kind to Weill. The synagogue where his father was cantor was destroyed by the Nazis, and his birthplace was demolished under the DDR. Nor has the 20th century been kind to Dessau, the seat of a not-very-grand Gropius-style duchy: industrialisation, heavy wartime bombing, hideous rebuilding, general economic and social depression.

But things are looking up. Gropius's magnificent 1925 Bauhaus survives everything and is once more in full swing: his entrancing suburban villas are being tidied up — one of them houses the new Kurt Weill Centre — and the 18th-century pavilions and parks on the outskirts of the town are slowly being restored. There are two outstanding Cranachs in the half-refurbished Anhalt Picture Gallery just behind the railway station.

It has always been considered a "problem" piece, being a play by Georg Kaiser with

OPERA

Der Silbersee
Anhaltisches Theater,
Dessau

And there is the Anhaltisches Theater, which opened with pomp in 1938 in the presence of various unmentionable people. It was bombed and rebuilt as it was in 1949, a fine example of totalitarian architecture which, as Osbert Lancaster reminded us, recognises no distinction between left and right. The stage is larger than Bayreuth's, and the comfortable auditorium seats just over 1,000. It houses precisely the sort of busy municipal ensemble giving opera, drama, musicals and ballet for which Weill wrote *Silbersee*. Composer and town could indeed do a lot for each other.

Silbersee was Weill's last work for the German theatre. It was given simultaneous premieres in nearby Leipzig, Magdeburg and Erfurt in February 1933, and was a sensational success; the Reichstag fire followed nine days later, performances were suppressed, and Weill fled to Paris.

The non-problems vanished in the highly accomplished Dessau production, which was given under the aegis of the drama company with a couple of guests from the opera ensemble. No seams

showed: you had to look up in the theatre yearbook to find out which were actors and which were singers — which is as it should be. A shortened but perfectly coherent version of Kaiser's text was played, and the music was extremely well conducted by Karl-Heinz Zentl.

The only arguable problem was the decision of the joint directors, Helmut Strassburger and Ernstgeorg Herling, to put the audience on stage and some of the action in the auditorium. Orchestral

sound was muffled and seating capacity limited to 250. This is the sort of "idea" that one has after a good dinner and should discard at breakfast the next day.

Otherwise, the evening was enormously rewarding: brilliant, unashamedly epic acting from the tenor Gerhard Siegel, centre, as the unemployed worker Severin

Stefanie Wüst charming as Fennimore, who gets to sing the rip-roaring *Ballad of Caesar's Death*. The many small roles were all expertly taken. Ensemble lives! And you saw precisely why the Nazis feared Weill so much: the combination of his music and Kaiser's *fauvist* text is lethal — ten times tougher than any Brecht play in the words of the original director, Douglas Sirk.

Over last weekend's other main offering, a wretchedly badly played and sung

Dreiroschenoper (music only), it would be kind to draw a veil: the promoters will need to exercise stricter quality control if the Dessau Weill Festival is to take off internationally. But it served to emphasize just how much Weill had changed as a composer in the five years between the two works. The waltz that ends *Silbersee* leads straight to Broadway. Contrary to received opinion, there really was only one Weill.

RODNEY MILNES

CONCERTS: Great period-instrument pioneers return to London; and jazz comes to the Fifties Festival with a tribute to Miles Davis

IT IS 43 years since Nikolaius Harnoncourt founded Vienna Concentus Musicus, and 39 years since they gave their first concert (they practised for four years to get it right). But any notion that Monday's all-Haydn programme was played by a band of doughty pioneers, long ago outclassed by the smooth virtuosity of younger ensembles, may be swiftly dispelled.

Period-instrument playing is certainly smoother these days. Another word would be blander. But for audacity, provocation and thrills, Harnoncourt and his orchestra remain a class apart.

That was apparent from the first bars of the Symphony No 52. Horn staccatos stung like hailstones; strings drew ferociously into their furious semiquavers. If anybody needed a vivid demonstration of what the *Sturm und Drang* movement meant to music, this was it.

Then came a remarkable change. Suddenly the string players were stroking fur; the phrasing was limp as a lily; the mood one of elegant pathos. Only Harnoncourt demands that all the tricks be

Calm after the Sturm

Concentus Musicus/
Harnoncourt
Barbican

Haydn meant to encompass such polarities in a single movement.

Some of Concentus Musicus' habits irritate as much today as 20 years ago: the affection of shading off slow-movement phrases so completely that the last chord is all but inaudible; the exuberant but also undeniably over-the-top hammering of any chord marked with an accent and quite a few that aren't. And when period instruments are played with such extrovert abandon there are bound to be accidents. Harnoncourt demands that all the tricks be

done without safety-net. That can upset those who prefer music-making to sound neat and careful.

But set that against the humour, the unsuspected depths, the glories of orchestral texture, that he uncovers. For the Symphony No 31, the "Horn-Symphony", he divided his four superb natural-horn players, two each side of the orchestra. The effect was blood-curdling. And again there was remarkable contrast, this time with the characterful flute, violin, cello and double bass soloists within the ensemble.

Sandwiched between the symphonies came vocal music. Barbara Bonney sang two arias from Haydn's operas with luscious tone, marred only by a tendency to start high notes slightly flat before settling properly. However, in the tremendous challenge of the *Semira di Berenice* — an astonishing work with wild modulations that anticipate the spirit of *Verismo* by a century — she was fully focused both in passion and pitch.

RICHARD MORRISON

duration, and received it from John Wallace.

Joanna MacGregor was the admirable soloist in John Cage's Prepared Piano Concerto, delicate and caressing in the whimsical musings the piano provides as contrast to the orchestra's arid dreamscape. The versatile MacGregor was no less at home with the stark jazz of Thelonious Monk's short solo, *Ask Me Now*, which formed a perfect link to the evening's second half.

Two Evans sidemen, Guy Barker and the veteran Lew Soloff, brought bright and poignant authenticity to the Davis-Evans venture. But, versatile though the London Sinfonia players are, the webs of sound and the attack of the player-piano, and uses even the winds percussively.

Bernd Alois Zimmermann's radical modernism was balanced with an anarchic interest in jazz. His trumpet concerto, *Nobody knows de trouble I see*, builds inexorably towards a big-band sound, before dying back to a chord consisting of all 12 notes. One of the great modern trumpet concertos, it demands almost unbroken virtuosity from the soloist during its quarter-hour

Japanese composer who died a fortnight ago.

Stenz was also the only person on the platform visibly enjoying the opening work: the players had a look of intense concentration as they dispatched Conlon Nancarrow's Study No 7 with panache. Originally written for the player-piano because of its complex, superhuman demands, the music sounded quirky and adventurous here; the arrangement preserves the webs of sound and the attack of the player-piano, and uses even the winds percussively.

Bernd Alois Zimmermann's radical modernism was balanced with an anarchic interest in jazz. His trumpet concerto, *Nobody knows de trouble I see*, builds inexorably towards a big-band sound, before dying back to a chord consisting of all 12 notes. One of the great modern trumpet concertos, it demands almost unbroken virtuosity from the soloist during its quarter-hour

Three numbers from *Sketches of Spain* were far more evocative, especially the Moorish *Pan Piper* and the memorable trumpet dialogue sequence in *Solea*. Far more effective than most composers' attempts at Spanishity, this music justified its place here on the grounds of its true originality.

JOHN ALLISON

Cellos get a chance to party

Ralph Kirshbaum et al/Wigmore Hall
OAE/Schiff/Queen Elizabeth Hall

NINE cellos in one evening, and not an orchestra in sight. But this was the 50th birthday of Ralph Kirshbaum and the 35th anniversary of the evening when Jacqueline du Pré made her London debut at the Wigmore Hall. What better place for the party? And what better reason than in support of the appeal set up in du Pré's memory for the new concert hall at St Hilda's College, Oxford?

Not all nine cellists played all of the time. But they got together — Ralph Kirshbaum, Steven Isserlis and assorted former pupils including Antonio Lysy and Robert Max — to play *Les Rôles Mages*, a sombre little interlude in an oratorio called *The Manger* written by Pablo Casals. Each voice entered, with its own distinct character, as the distant figure of the Three Wise Men doggedly followed its own musical star. And then a flutter of gruff pizzicato and a high, bright human voice: the Bogota-born soprano Juana Lascarré led the cellos in the haunting vocalise of the fifth of Villa-Lobos's *Brasileiras*.

David Popper, the Prague-born Paganini of the cello, pitted Kirshbaum and Isserlis against each other in his Suite in G major, published in 1876 and an unashamed piece of salon virtuosity. Isserlis, the lower voice of the two, threatened to play Kirshbaum off the stage, vaulting through his bass part while Kirshbaum valiantly stretched for the horribly fast, horribly high notes assigned to him.

Kirshbaum's own thoughtful and perceptive musician showed himself well enough in Brahms's E minor Sonata and in Debussy's Cello Sonata, in which his pianist was Peter Frankl — and what fiery flashes of imagination there were in this piano playing. This concert also, significantly, celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Kirshbaum-Frankl partnership.

If Kirshbaum is the sensitive singer and conversationalist and Isserlis the lionine virtuoso of the cello, then Heinrich Schiff is the bustling great bear. His Queen Elizabeth Hall concert with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment was also something of a cello-fest for Georg Christoph Wagenseil's Sonata in A after the interval. Schiff

found himself in the company of the OAE's own principal cellists, Timothy Mason and Susan Sheppard, with Chi-Chi Nwanoku and her double-bass keeping them in mischievous order.

The composer was much admired by the likes of Mozart and Burney; the work was a bold exercise in *galanterie*.

with a loose-limbed introduction of occasional harmonic vagary, a sighing slowish movement and a pert little closing minuet.

Haydn's Cello Concerto in C, conducted from the bow, as it were, by Schiff, was drawn with brisk, brusque strokes, figuration flying, ornaments twirling into place, and

Schiff's sturdy fingers studiously avoiding any vibrato except in the case of emergency. This was a performance which lived on its nerves: for every note and phrase was freshly and excitingly re-examined and re-injected, a bold dozen or so notes would get lost in the hush-hush.

Flecks of perspiration flew, eyes flashed, and many a smile was exchanged on stage as well as in the auditorium.

HILARY FINCH

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Comedy in store

BILLY JENKINS, southeast London's answer to Victor Borge (with a dash of Spike Jones thrown in), has been highlighting the absurdities liberally thrown up by popular culture in general, and jazz in particular, since 1982, when his seminal recording, *Sounds Like Bromley*, first hit the shops. His latest venture, a collaboration between members of his Voice of God Collective and the brass and reeds quartet, *Fun Horns of Berlin*, has a veneer of respectability — the tour was funded in part by the Arts Council and this concert recorded by Radio 3 — but underneath, Jenkins remains a uniquely eccentric iconoclast.

There were clenched-fist salutes to Bert Weedon and Jarvis Cocker, jokey refer-

Billy Jenkins
Purcell Room

ences to Ronnie Scott and his recent report on jazz patches of Radio 3-baiting and a wealth of similar satirical business, but, crucially, the seven musicians with Jenkins generally played poker-faced straightmen to his all-licensed fool. *The Fun Horns* proved to be a superbly tight, well-drilled unit, whether adding meat to Jenkins's R&B-type arrangements or performing their own meat material, and VOGC regulars — bassist Steve Watts, drummer Martin France and pianist Huw Warren — all coped with their leader's sudden calls for everything from Marvin Gaye-type smoothy slinkiness to heavy metal with remarkable aplomb.

It is Jenkins himself, though, who commands attention throughout, even when he is just sitting appreciating the others' efforts. Like Borge, he infuses everything he does with droll, dry humour. Thus not only the overtly amusing features but also the superficially "serious" passages of hectic, scrabbling group improvisation, are all grist to Jenkins's comedic mill.

Since Jenkins's natural habitat is the small, intimately informal jazz club, the relative primeness of the South Bank might have handicapped a less adaptable artist. Jenkins, though, from the moment he stepped on stage to read a witty excuse-postcard from an absent band member to his closing feature, *Jazz Had a Baby* — and They Called It Avant-garde, had the audience in the palm of his hand.

CHRIS PARKER

Across the popular divide

London Sinfonietta/
Stenz
Queen Elizabeth Hall

FOR THE first time in the ongoing "Towards the Millennium" survey of this century's music, part of a concert has been devoted to popular music of the day.

In the London Sinfonietta's concert on Monday featuring the 1950s, we heard the first live British performances of two Miles Davis-Gil Evans suites — works without which it would be hard to capture the spirit of the decade.

Extending the scope of this series towards crossover styles is, of course, something that has been done in previous years, but it was especially fruitful here: not because in the 1950s much contemporary "classical" music was so bleak, but because more than ever composers were crossing the popular divide in both directions.

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THE TIMES

1996 SURVEY OF LONDON SECRETARIAL SALARIES

The eighth annual survey of secretarial salaries and employment conditions, compiled by Gordon Yates in conjunction with The Times, is now available.

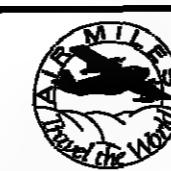
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The survey report runs to twenty pages of analysis, information and reports prepared in a readable, accessible style. It includes whole survey pay averages along with pay levels and employment prospects within sixteen different categories of business type.

This publication is freely available to anyone with responsibility for recruitment or employment of secretarial and administrative staff. To reserve a complimentary copy please forward your business card, or name and title on company letterhead, to Louise Brace at The Times, Advertisement Department, 1 Virginia Street, London E1 9BL.

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Will new technology replace the boss's personal assistant? Jennai Cox talks to a woman whose mission is to safeguard their future

The private girls' school she attended might not remember Amanda Fone. She was expected to manage only two Es at A level and told she was not "university material".

In the event she achieved Bs in history and English. Since then she has been head of the college leaver division of a leading recruitment agency, runner-up in the 1994 *Cosmopolitan Young Woman* of the Year awards, and has helped to launch the "Take your daughters to work" initiative.

Last year, at 32, she became chairman of Fastrack, an organisation helping secretaries to do the very thing she has had to do for herself — develop their careers. "I firmly believe people can do whatever they want to," she says. "Fastrack is here to help them."

The idea for the organisation took seven years to develop before its London launch in June last year. In eight months 1,200 secretaries have joined and branches have been started in Birmingham and Bristol. The target membership is 10,000 with branches around the world. Ms Fone wants to recruit at least 4,000 of those by the end of this year.

"There are 750,000 secretaries in Britain," she says. "And our research indicates they all want help, guidance, encouragement and knowledge."

Ms Fone is qualified to offer it. She started as a receptionist for Angela Mortimer Recruitment after a talk given at secretarial college by its founder. "She was the first person who made going out to work seem like fun. I started at the

Champion of the office secretary

bottom, which is where you begin to make an impact," she says. Having worked her way up, today she listens to what those now at the grass roots are saying.

"When you are interviewing

secretaries every day you hear the reasons they are leaving their jobs," she says. "You build up a familiarity with that end of the market place. We felt there was a need to start providing some of the answers."

Facing awkward issues is important at Fastrack and among those up for discussion this year are "Technology replaced the manager, will it replace the secretary?" and "The secretary as the office wife".

"We are not afraid of being unpopular," Ms Fone says. "There are issues people do not want to address, but we are not going to put secretaries on the back and say, 'There, there, everything will be all right'. We are saying, 'Wake up, there is a changing world out there, have you thought about your place in it?'

Ms Fone says: "We interview hundreds of secretaries each year and we are saying it is up to them to

go out and make something of their future. Fastrack will provide the infrastructure but our success depends on their success."

Fastrack members are offered courses, talks, career advice and a monthly magazine, through which the organisation introduces ideas it thinks secretaries should be considering.

"Anything can happen. I call it

says, 'I love my job, and so much of what I think anyway is connected with it.' Not due back from maternity leave until April, Ms Fone has spent her time setting up an office at home. Twelve-week-old Oliver has had to fit in with her plans and was sleeping through the night within days.

"I don't care what anyone says, you have to discipline babies by adults. I learn on day 15 that a bottle-feed just before bedtime makes them sleep through the night and the next morning I was mentally alert and able to get back to work," she says. She hired a maternity nurse to teach her how to juggle baby and career. It was the most terrifying experience, she says. "I said I had to learn

fast because I love my baby and my career and want to balance them and do both well. I know that it's not going to be easy."

Managing her time effectively is a goal Ms Fone has set herself for 1996 and, with the trend to part-time work, she says it is a subject all secretaries should be considering. A Fastrack workshop on teleworking is set for March 21.

When she is not at work or caring for Oliver, Ms Fone relaxes by swimming and playing tennis with her husband, a freelance racing correspondent. She also helps her mother to run National Youth Ballet, a charity, and loves entertaining. She watches *Panorama* and *World in Action* because "they are asking questions" and reads at least one newspaper a day. For escapism she turns to classics such as Jane Austen. "I love reading about the way things used to be and thinking yes, but can they be done differently now? I loved history at school."

History and sport aside, she has few other happy memories of school life. Sent to boarding school at 13 she missed her younger brother and sisters, but says she benefited in other ways. "I learnt to choose my friends well and stand on my own two feet, which is one of the most important things you can teach a child." It is also what she is urging Fastrack members to do.

Merit, perhaps something Ms

Fone was not credited with at school, is the only requirement to joining the organisation she now heads. "We don't care where you come from, what your name is or how much money you have," she says. "All we want to know is whether you want to do a job and do it well. With the right attitude, you have to succeed."

It is the philosophy Ms Fone says she lives and breathes. There is little doubt it is working well for her.



Amanda Fone of Fastrack: "We are not afraid of being unpopular"

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Spreading jam too thickly leaves magic unpreserved

Well, England could still win the cricket World Cup, and if ever an entire competition was invalidated by a single fact, that is the fact and this the competition. The World Cup is a mechanism that has been constructed, not around the search for the best cricket team, but around the idea of seeing how many hours of television could be cobbled together. Answer: an awful lot, and practically all of it — Kenya apart — unwatchable.

But there is an historical precedent. There is never enough incentive to do well in the group games: Pakistan made nearly as big a set of idiots of themselves at the last World Cup as England have this. They went on to win it as Imran's cornered tigers. Perhaps, like retaliation, you should get your humiliation in first.

The group stages of this World Cup mean virtually nothing: there are only seven matches in the whole competition that actually count, these being the quarter-finals, the semi's, and the final. I have been fed up with the competition from the first ball.

More and more and more dreary games in dreary jinjams. And what if other sporting organisations took note, and adapted the same idea? Oh, yeah, give them any old rubbish, as much as possible, they'll lap it up.

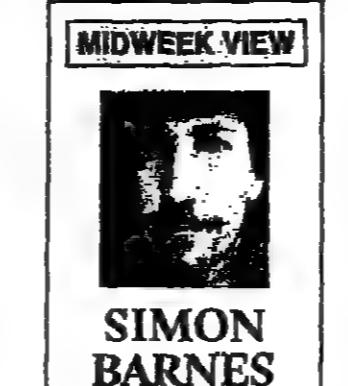
Domestic football's great day of the year is the FA Cup Final, an ancient day of magic. Wouldn't rather spoil things if they tried to stretch things out, in a blatantly commercial fashion, and had, say, two Cup Finals every year?

Of course, it would. I know that for a fact, because it has already

happened. The League Cup, or whatever the damn thing is called this year, brings us a second cup final. The competition is so stupid that Alex Ferguson, of Manchester United, didn't even bother putting out his first team. Worthy contempt for an unworthy competitor.

Throughout football, the League Cup is held in mild contempt. Nice to win it, doesn't matter a damn if you lose. And that feeling has now infected the FA Cup. The same spirit prevails: a cup is nothing special. There is no magic. It is overwhelmingly fashionable to say that the league is the thing, even if it is the Bezier Homes League.

Or suppose they were to have the Olympic Games not every four years, but every two. That would take the magic away, wouldn't it? But of course, we already do have the Olympics every two



SIMON BARNES

But what about the World Cup, I mean the World Cup. Wouldn't it be dreadful if the football World Cup took place every two years? That really would kill the magic. We had a World Cup two years ago; we are not going to have one this summer, are we?

Oh yes, we are. Not the actual World Cup, but still a major international football tournament. This year, the European football championship finals have been expanded to a gourmandising 16 teams, as many as contested the World Cup finals of 1966.

But surely these are greedy things, associated with sports who have lost their way, trapped in a mire of commercialism. If we go to, say, domestic cricket, surely we will find a saner perspective.

But endless county cricket is the oldest tradition in the game, and it

is maintained as part of the fabric of the nation, for all its inevitable production line of time-serving mediocrities. No other country has so intense a domestic programme: no other country does so consistently poorly at Test level.

Still, it better than frittering your season away in meaningless one-dayers. Apart, of course, from one good solid cup competition, with a great cup final every year. And the Sunday league. So why stop there? Cricket doesn't. We have a second cup, and therefore a second final. How many unique days can you have in a year?

Ah yes, you say, but I bet it's worse in the United States, they're all mad for money. If you were talking basketball or ice hockey, I might agree. But baseball has only one competition, and only one World Series, and this forbidding

rhythm, free from second chances, is its beauty. The National Football League has but one Super Bowl and it comes at the end of one short, sharp season.

The sports that possess a genuinely unique and great event retain something special — the magic of Occasion. There are not two Boat Races, or two Grand Nationals: there are not two Wimbledons, or two Badminton. These events burst the barriers of their sport, and of sport itself. It is not just rowing folk, or even sporting folk who watch the Boat Race.

Too often, more sport means worse sport. Just another day at the office. A diet that blunts the appetite. And yet still the expansion continues, still the lunatic stress on the gigantic. Does sport really believe it is immune to the law of diminishing returns?

Discipline assumes extra importance in new era

BY DAVID HANDS
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

THE first season of professional rugby union in the southern hemisphere may have brought new wealth to the leading players but, as has been the case in the north, there is also a new awareness of the game's image. The first weekend of the Super 12 Tournament has brought not only a crop of injuries, but disciplinary problems.

These include two players who might have been expected to know better by now. Johan le Roux, the South African prop sent home from the New Zealand tour of 1994 after an ear-biting incident, was sent off for butting yesterday as Transvaal were beaten by Australian Capital Territory (ACT). His countryman, James Dalton, sent off against Canada during last year's World Cup, has been suspended after a kicking incident.

The game in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, now tied irrevocably for the next decade to a \$360 million television contract agreed last summer, can ill afford such problems. The authorities seek to market the sport against stiff competition, but last weekend Transvaal lost three international players to injury during their defeat by New South Wales (NSW) and their own indisipline has

further weakened them. Le Roux, the Transvaal prop, has only just completed an 18-month suspension after television cameras caught him biting the ear of Sean Fitzpatrick, the New Zealand captain, at Wellington in July 1994.

Four days after being cleared to play once more, he was sent off by Australia's leading official, Wayne Erickson, as ACT won 13-9. The South African was involved in a clash of heads with Marco Caputo, the opposing hooker, who required treatment. According

to Kitch Christie, Transvaal's and South Africa's coach, Le Roux retaliated after his own nose was broken, but there was little support from Francois Pienaar, his own captain. Meanwhile, Dalton was warned by a disciplinary hearing that he had been fortunate to escape heavier punishment for his "dangerous and inexcusable" kicking of Mark Bell, the NSW hooker. Dalton had appealed against his two-match suspension after being cited following Friday's opening Super 12 fixture in Sydney.

Richard Bramley, the Cambridge lock, returns to captain England in their final student international of the season — against Ireland at Oxford on March 15 — before selection for the Student World Cup in South Africa in May.

On this occasion, with the agreement of club and constituent body, Northampton have effectively taken over the fixture and McGeechan, the director of rugby at Franklin's Gardens, is fielding his strongest side.

After appearing in the opening two games of the

season, Hunter, 27, who has been capped seven times by England, was laid low by a virus and has only recently returned to full fitness. He will play at full back.

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Hunter feels way back

IAN HUNTER, the forgotten man of English rugby, will be restored to the public eye today when he plays against the Barbarians in the annual Mobs Memorial Match at Northampton (David Hands writes). He will do so in what Ian McGeechan enjoys calling his "dream team", even though it will appear in the traditional green of East Midlands.

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SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

BY ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT
There are some plays that only an expert would consider, and some that he would only make against another expert. Consider this example, from the US 1995 Nationals at New Orleans.

Game all Dealer West IMP's

♦AQS	♦V10 75
♦KJ6	
♦10 42	
♦AK5	
♦9 8 7 4	
♦9 8 7 4	♦A10
♦V8 3	♦A4 3
♦Q 6 5	♦9 8 7 3
♦4 10 7 3	♦J 8 8 2

White: ♦AQS; ♦V10 75; ♦KJ6; ♦10 42; ♦AK5; ♦9 8 7 4; ♦9 8 7 4; ♦A10; ♦V8 3; ♦Q 6 5; ♦4 10 7 3
Black: ♦KJ6; ♦10 42; ♦AK5; ♦9 8 7 4; ♦9 8 7 4; ♦A10; ♦V8 3; ♦Q 6 5; ♦4 10 7 3
Contract: Two Spades by South Lead: two of diamonds

The first point to note about the hand is North's decision to overcall and then make a take-out double to show his extra values, rather than starting with a double; that approach is becoming more and more the expert practice.

West (Brian Glubok) had what looked like an automatic opening lead of a top club, but he saw a little more deeply into the position. East probably did not have length in the majors, and from his muted diamond support presumably had no great length there. So he was unlikely to be ruffing clubs. Instead West chose the two of diamonds.

The declarer Ed Nagy cashed the top diamonds, and played a low heart from dummy to Glubok's Jack now. Glubok played a low club — and Nagy called for dummy's queen. Now he could arrange to ruff a heart to hand and take a spade finesse for his

contract. Why did Nagy rise with the queen of clubs? It was because if Glubok had ace-jack or king-jack in clubs, he would have shifted to the jack, protecting against his partner having the ace or king without the ten; with those holdings and the queen in dummy the coup de grâce.

But be warned, that sort of inference is only safe against an expert.

□ Robert Sheehan writes on bridge Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

- JAPE
a. Japanese enamelfork
b. A camel colt
c. A prank or trick

- SUFFUMIGATE
a. A female oblate
b. To undersmoke
c. To beat black and blue

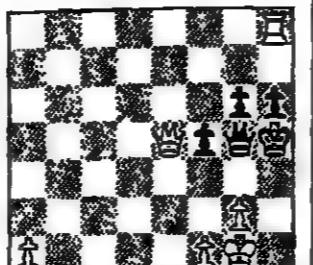
- THIBBLE
a. To pretend to be ill
b. An Anglo-Saxon area
c. A spout
BOTHAN
a. An arrogant lout
b. A fencer's pelvic box
c. A drinking den

Answers on page 46

WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene

White to play. This position is from the game Smirnov — Abramov, USSR 1946. Normally a king finds shelter behind a wall of pawns. Here, instead, the black king is attempting to shelter in front of a row of pawns. How did White demonstrate the flaw in this plan?



Solution on page 46

MIDWEEK VIEW

SIMON BARNES

years. We have the summer games this year; in two years, we have the winter games. Jam yesterday, jam tomorrow, and yes, great big dollops of jam today. You can get sick of jam.

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Shadow Foreign Secretary applauded for visionary speech

Cook finds recipe for lottery relief

By RICHARD EVANS, RACING JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR

IN A speech overflowing with sparkling wit and considerable vision, Robin Cook yesterday offered New Labour's remedy to some of racing's most pressing problems, which left the sport's leaders purring with pleasure.

The shadow Foreign Secretary, whose love of racing extends to writing a regular tipping column for the *Glasgow Herald*, used the opportunity as guest speaker at the annual Tote lunch in London to spell out how a regular £1 million jackpot to combat the effects of the Lottery could be achieved: why the Tote and the British Horseracing Board (BHB) should become closely



RICHARD EVANS

Nap: NORTHERN UNION
(3.40 Wolverhampton)
Next best: Galapino
(3.10 Wolverhampton)

intertwined — and he offered bookmakers the tempting proposition of being allowed to take bets on the Lottery.

Addressing one of the most Conservative audiences in the land, Cook won over the 220 guests in a trice with his humour and direct approach. Even Lord Wyatt of Weard, chairman of the Tote and renowned for his pro-Government sympathies, acknowledged publicly that Cook had lived up to his reputation as "the wittiest speaker since Aneurin Bevan." For good measure, Lord Hartington, the BHB chairman, also congratulated Cook on his speech.

With the effect of the Lottery on betting turnover clearly in mind, Cook offered some friendly advice to Wyatt, who is never slow to laud the supposed achievements of his

Cook believes larger jackpots would combat Lottery effect. Photograph: Denzil McNeelance

pool betting organisation. "The relative market share between the Tote and the bookmakers is now a lot less important to racing than that we should help them both to keep racing's share of the gambling market," he said.

He disclosed that a Labour working party, whose membership includes Chris Bell, managing director of Ladbrokes, was looking at how to amend the Lottery. The issues under discussion included whether bookmakers

should be allowed to take bets on lottery numbers, as they are in Ireland. "For myself, I would argue that any measure that halts the decline in small betting shops and keeps the public coming through the door is in racing's interest."

However, in a crucial section of his speech, Cook said there might have to be a different arrangement. "The Lottery is, of course, nothing but a large pool betting system, a sort of big brother to the Tote. If we are honest, the enormous

interest in the Lottery has revealed racing's failure to attract a big enough pool to capture the public's imagination. If we are to fight back we need a regular £1 million pool — and the Tote cannot offer that without more outlets."

If Ladbrokes and Hills were to drop their opposition to Tote Direct terminals in their shops, Labour might be more accommodating to their desire to bet on the Lottery. His suggestion lit up the Tote audience and tongue in cheek,

he continued: "I am not suggesting anything so crude as a deal. New Labour is a gentle, non-threatening animal. I am, though, suggesting that one positive attitude might encourage another positive attitude in response."

Cook then addressed the relationship between the Tote and the BHB and recalled how a Commons home affairs select committee had recommended five years ago the Tote should be vested in a democratic body such as the BHB.

A green paper from the Home Office on a possible Tote transfer appears to have sunk in the Whitehall quicksand and, with Michael Howard, Home Secretary, sizing only feet away, Cook gave a strong hand as to Labour's attitude.

The BHB is an immense step forward for racing. Whatever legitimate debate there may be about the representative character of the BHB, no-one denies that the BHB will be the governing body that shapes the future of racing. For myself, if the Tote wants a secure place in that future of racing, then I think it would be to our closer structural relationship to the BHB."

He called on Howard to take time to finish the green paper on the Tote and, in a barbed political comment, Cook said he would use his influence on Jack Straw, the shadow Home Secretary, not to complain if Howard shelved the Asylum Bill for a couple of months "to address the more pressing matter of the future of the Tote."

Cook's thoughts were in contrast to those of Lord Wyatt, who voiced his outright opposition to Tote Direct terminals in their shops. Labour might be more accommodating to their desire to bet on the Lottery. His suggestion lit up the Tote audience and tongue in cheek.

One Man hardens as champion drops out

BY JULIAN MUSCAT

ONE MAN tightened his grip on the Cheltenham Gold Cup yesterday after Master Oats, the winner 12 months ago, suffered a leg injury that has ruled him out of steeplechasing's blue riband.

The Gordon Richards-trained grey, who completes his Gold Cup preparation with a gallop at Carlisle racecourse today, has hardened to 11-0 favourite with William Hill. The firm then bets 9-2 Imperial Cell, 5-1 Dublin Flyer, 8-1 Monsieur Le Cure, Royal Quest.

Couldn't Be Better, a 12-1 chance confirmed his place in the line-up a week tomorrow when pleased his trainer, Charlie Brooks, in a workout after racing at Newbury yesterday.

Master Oats' defection resulted from his aggravating an old injury to his off-rear. The Kim Bailey-trained gelding returned sore from a workout over the weekend and subsequent scans confirmed the damage to be more than superficial. He will be roughed off for the season.

"He has had leg problems before and there's always the chance it could happen again," Bailey said of his horse yesterday. "I'm just glad it happened now and not during the big race when it could have been a lot worse. There is good chance he will be back next season."

The build-up to Cheltenham has been fraught with disappointment for Bailey. The trainer dominated proceedings 12 months ago, when, in addition to Master Oats, he saddled Alderbrook to land the Champion Hurdle.

GUIDE TO OUR IN-LINE RACECARD

101 11/4000 TIMES 13 (H,F,D) (Adm D Rebecchi) 8 Fall 12-0... 8 West (7) ...
Racecard numbers: See page 15. If... = lost; P... = pushed up; U... = unplaced; R... = beaten; S... = second; D... = third; L... = fourth; H... = fifth; G... = good; S... = soft; good to soft; D... = dampened; W... = water; V... = very; H... = hard; E... = Eyeshield; C... = course names; D... = weight; Rider plus any allowance. The Times' declared winner (CD) = course and distance. Private handicapper's rating.

The Times Private Handicapper's top rating: 4.25 JOCKS CROSS. Carl Evans: 3.55 Squirrel's daughter.

BANGOR

1.55 Real Popcorn
2.25 Perhaps
2.55 Bananno Bill

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GOING: GOOD TO SOFT

SIS

1.55 HOLYWELL SELLING HURDLE (22.334; 2m 10) (17 runners)

101 SP-PP-BLIRIUS 57 (S) (Mrs P Bond) 9 Day 11-4...
102 SP-SP-LORD GLENNARA 16 (P) (Dr Jocelyn) 9 S-H...11-4...
103 SP-SP-DOUVEST 11 (S) Cambridge 9 D McLean 9-1-2...
104 SP-SP-COMPTON 7 (S) (Mrs M) 9-1-2...
105 SP-SP-HIGHEST ROOTS 12 (Knight Hause) 9 Mrs S 1-2...
106 SP-SP-MY-UNLUCKY 8 (S) (Wesley) 9 Mrs S 1-2...
107 SP-SP-PALMERS LAD 20 (P) (P) 9 Mrs S 1-2...
108 SP-SP-WALLS MILL 130 (S) (Monty T Marion) 10-11-2...
111 SP-SP-RED PERIOD 14 (S) (Mrs A) 9 Mrs S 1-2-10-11-2...
112 SP-SP-SQUALEEN JEAN (S) (Brett) 9 Mrs S 1-2-10-11-2...
114 SP-SP-COAST ALONG 6 (T) (Becky) 9 Mrs S 1-2-10-11-2...
115 SP-SP-ROSE 15 (S) (Mrs A) 9 Mrs S 1-2-10-11-2...
116 SP-SP-TOKSON 20 (Mrs A) 9 Mrs S 1-2-10-11-2...
117 SP-SP-LAWNWOOD LADY 11 (Mrs A) Mrs S 1-2-10-11-2...
BETTING: 1-2 Coast Along, 4-1 Real Popcorn, 6-1 Bananno Bill, 7-1 Highgate Mild, 10-1 Land Glenna, 12-1 Etimo 14-2 Recitation Lad, 16-1 Stars

FORM FOCUS

LORD GLENNARA best recent effort 2nd 3rd of 13 to Vagabond in selling race at Stratford (2m). SP-SP-ROSE best recent effort 1st 2nd of 13 to Recitation Lad, 16-1 Stars in selling race at Stratford (2m). SP-SP-TOKSON 20 (Mrs A) Mrs S 1-2-10-11-2 in selling race at Stratford (2m). SP-SP-LAWNWOOD LAD 11 (Mrs A) Mrs S 1-2-10-11-2 in selling race at Stratford (2m). SP-SP-RED PERIOD 14 (S) (Mrs A) Mrs S 1-2-10-11-2 in selling race at Stratford (2m). SP-SP-SQUALEEN JEAN (S) (Brett) 9 Mrs S 1-2-10-11-2 in selling race at Stratford (2m). SP-SP-COAST ALONG 6 (T) (Becky) 9 Mrs S 1-2-10-11-2 in selling race at Stratford (2m). SP-SP-ROSE 15 (S) (Mrs A) Mrs S 1-2-10-11-2 in selling race at Stratford (2m). SP-SP-TOKSON 20 (Mrs A) Mrs S 1-2-10-11-2 in selling race at Stratford (2m). SP-SP-LAWNWOOD LADY 11 (Mrs A) Mrs S 1-2-10-11-2 in selling race at Stratford (2m). SP-SP-RED PERIOD 14 (S) (Mrs A) Mrs S 1-2-10-11-2 in selling race at Stratford (2m). 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